DICKEY'S ALL IN

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TORONTO metro®

Tuesday, December 18, 2012

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BOY LAID TO REST

A woman comforts a boy as mourners depart the Honan Funeral Home after the service for Jack Pinto, 6, on Monday in Newtown, Conn. Pinto was one of the 20 students killed in the Sandy Hook Elementary School mass shooting. Two funerals on Monday ushered in what will be a week of services and burials. More coverage, pages 12 & 13. MARIO TAMA/GETTY IMAGES

Armbands for Newtown victims causing alarm

Toronto teachers.
Gesture to honour slain dismaying to parents who don't want their kids to know too much

Like many parents, Karen Majerly hugged her son a little tighter than usual when she picked him up from school on Friday.

"Some kids were hurt in a school in the U.S., but you're safe," she told him — and said nothing more. So when she heard the union had asked teachers to wear black armbands and hold a moment of silence for the Newtown victims this week, the Halton mother was shocked.

"It's a parent's job to choose whether their child would even hear about this story," she said. "I could just picture my son asking, 'What's that?'"

When elementary-school teachers stage one-day strikes Tuesday in eight regions, including Toronto, Durham and Peel, many will wear black armbands and hold a minute of silence at 9 a.m. on the picket line. Many schools have lowered their flags to half-mast and held moments of silence.

But the gestures are alarming some parents who would rather protect their children from the horrific shooting.

Martin Long, president of the Toronto local of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, said that past experience with disasters like 9/11 has shown that children and teachers do need to be able to express their grief publicly.

"Teachers have to find a way of responding to it, of dealing with their own sadness and also helping their kids process it," he said.

Many teachers are divided on the idea, and Long added that no one is required to wear an armband.

But Sandra Mendlowitz, a Hospital for Sick Children psychologist, said parents shouldn't try to keep the shooting a secret — it's simply impossible.

"They're going to hear about it from friends, from other sources," she said. "It's better that the source of information is actually parents."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Hike tabs, save lives?

Research has found raising the price of alcohol would deter crime, but one veteran Toronto cop has his doubts PAGE 4

Reunited for the holidays

Two kids are back with their mom in Toronto after they were allegedly hidden by relatives in Zimbabwe PAGE 16

Bucket lists brimming

Celebrities like Chris Colfer and Joel McHale let Metro in on what they'd do if faced with the end of the world PAGE 29

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Property taxes

Toronto budget calls for 2 per cent tax hike

Toronto's property taxes are going to rise a bit more than earlier proposed, to add a few spending items and account for the impacts of reassessment and council tax policy.

After originally pegging the increase at 1.95 per cent, the budget committee Monday boosted that to an even two per cent. The difference raises an extra $1.15 million.

The budget committee approved the last-minute spending Monday at the request of the chair, Coun. Mike Del Grande.

After the proposed $9.4-billion 2013 operating budget is reviewed by council's executive committee, it will go to council for final sign-off in mid-January.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Mayor's return

Vacationing Ford back 'shortly': Aide

Mayor Rob Ford will be returning "shortly" from his "personal time" out of the city, his press secretary, George Christopoulos, said Monday.

"He is not back yet," is all Christopoulos would say by email when asked to elaborate on Ford's abrupt vacation. Ford flew out of Pearson International Airport on Dec. 10, a fact acknowledged by his office only after fellow travellers reported it on Twitter.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Rob Ford THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

Firefighters battle blaze at aerosol-manufacturing warehouse

Fire crews battled a large commercial fire in Brampton Monday at Empack, an aerosol manufacturer, on Walker Drive. Fifty firefighters and a hazmat team were on scene. One man was injured and the fire is under investigation, officials said. ALEX CONSIGLIO/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Will divided TTC union cause issues for riders?

'Problematic for the public.' While Bob Kinnear remains president, new board is split in its support

Alleged irregularities include:

- Some members are said to have used the wrong ballots, some reported not being able to vote or having no ballots available.
- Election propaganda smearing some Kinnear-supported candidates being distributed in TTC workplaces. That contravenes union rules.

A split inside the powerful TTC workers' union, including allegations of irregularities in the Dec. 5 executive elections, could spell trouble for TTC riders, union sources are warning.

A division between the maintenance workers and the drivers and collectors on the operations side of the 10,000-member local, which was behind a 2008 snap transit strike, has resurfaced on the union executive. That may prove "problematic for the public and riders," according to one union official.

The union's president, Bob Kinnear, is a controversial figure publicly. But inside the local he was popular enough to be acclaimed for a fourth term in October. But with only one vote on the executive, his ability to act could be hampered without the backing of a majority of the 17-member board. Its support is said to be split down the middle.

The division comes at a critical time. Not only is the local embarking on contract negotiations next year, but the TTC has begun contracting out jobs in an attempt to contain costs. There are also concerns about automation as the TTC moves to incorporate the Presto electronic fare card.

A larger than normal turnout is expected at a Local 113 membership meeting on Tuesday. Union members could decide to challenge the election of some of the local's new executive board.

"That representatives of the organization are going in different directions … ensures dissension and confusion at the TTC," said the union source.

The province ceded to a request from city council last year and removed TTC workers' right to strike.

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A sober look at alcohol pricing, consumption and violence

Part 2. Researchers say more expensive drinks at bars could save lives

JESSICA SMITH
jessica.smith@metronews.ca

Staff Sgt. Greg Thorpe looks at the line in front of Maison Mercer and the Ferrari parked outside of the club. The clientele is young and monied — no matter how high you raise the price of alcohol they're still going to drink, he says.

Later in my drive along with police in the Entertainment District, a voice over the police radio calls for two ambulances to the club. One for a reaction to drugs or alcohol and another for someone getting hit over the head with a bottle.

There is much research that finds instituting a minimum price for alcohol would reduce crime.

The theory goes, by protecting their wallet, some people will stay a little more sober and keep themselves from making a big mistake.

Researchers in Toronto, British Columbia and England have been working together to determine the effect of instituting a minimum price for alcohol and presented a paper on the issue at The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) earlier this month.

Their research estimates that if the LCBO charged a minimum of $1.50 per standard drink, there would be 31 fewer alcohol-related deaths, 1,393 fewer alcohol-related hospital admissions and 1,687 fewer alcohol-related crimes committed in Ontario in a year.

The researchers calculated the alcohol consumption patterns of different age and sex groups, and how consumption changes when price changes. They then used evidence that links consumption of alcohol to risk of committing crime to estimate the drop in crime that would occur if the price of alcohol changes, said Dr. John Holmes. He is research fellow in the School of Public Health with the University of Sheffield, which conducts extensive research into alcohol policies, including this study.

To get enough information, the research synthesized the evidence gathered from a variety of sources, said Holmes. The evidence of how Canadians respond to alcohol price changes was taken from LCBO sales data.

Of the 1,687 crimes avoided with a $1.50 minimum price, 396 would be violent, according to the research. If the minimum price was raised to $3 — which would increase the minimum price of a 750 ml bottle of hard alcohol to more than $50 — an estimated 34,122 crimes could be avoided, 8,185 of them violent.

"It's fair to say once you get up to that high levels of minimum pricing our estimates are less certain," he said. "I don't think a $3 minimum price is really on the agenda."

Best practices

In response to the first part of this series on alcohol, crime and the club zone published in Monday's Metro, Steve Geogriev, owner of Bloke & 4th, has advice for club owners:

- Keep kind and courteous staff, who are trained to deal with problems if they arise and are in constant communication with one another.
- Be selective at the door, target a professional clientele and use a guest list so you know who is coming to your club or restaurant.
- Serve food. It attracts a better clientele.

Toronto police attend to the scene of a fight at John and Richmond in the Entertainment District on Saturday night. JESSICA SMITH/METRO

Counter point

Pricier booze won't keep consumption down: Cop

Twenty-five years of policing have convinced Staff Sgt. Greg Thorpe that price won't stop people from overindulging.

"You are not going to stop the fun of a 19- to 25-year-old," he said. "They're just going to go more in hock."

If you keep raising the prices, you'll just add to the "booze can" business, he says. The illegal bars shut down all the time, and pop back up again.

Opening a booze can can be profitable for criminal types, he says. With a space, some cheap furniture, word of mouth or social media, the operators make a killing. When they're caught, they get a provincial offence — a fine — and no criminal record.

"The price of beer doesn't really do it," he said.

Thorpe does agree with one small policy suggestion made by one of his officers: Get rid of bottle service. When the bottles are used as a weapon, it's brutal.

JESSICA SMITH/METRO

Staff Sgt. Greg Thorpe METRO FILE

Point

"It fits in with what we know in terms of common sense. And there's quite clear evidence that if you do change the price of alcohol you do get a response in the volume of crime."

Dr. John Holmes, research fellow in the School of Public Health, University of Sheffield

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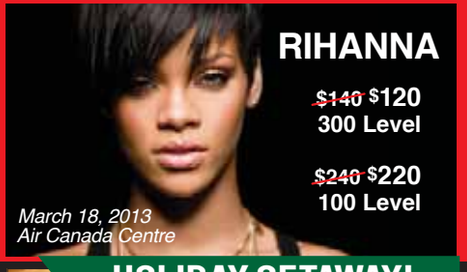

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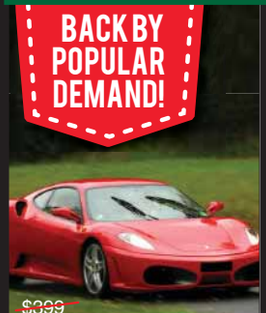

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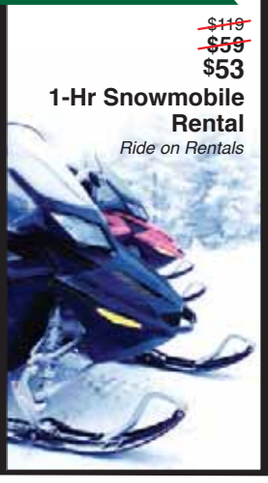

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Liberal leadership race

Hoskins says he's open to road tolls

Ontario needs some medicine to cure its ailing economy, and that could include road tolls and raising the minimum wage, Liberal leadership hopeful Dr. Eric Hoskins said Monday.

In a lunch speech to the Economic Club of Canada, Hoskins promised to reduce the cost of health care by investing in preventative medicine as well as nursing homes and home-care services. Ontario's prescription drug plan would be based on income, so people won't have to stay on welfare to keep their drug coverage.

He also promised to develop a 20-year transportation plan in the GTA, with new sources of revenue to pay for the expansion, which could include road tolls and congestion charges.

"Bottom line: Everything is on the table," he said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Dr. Eric Hoskins TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Big jackpot

Lotto winners plan to live just as before

A $21.2-million jackpot is helping a Vaughan couple get through what had been a rough year.

Les and Beverley Cassidy, who won the Dec. 12 Lotto 6/49 draw, claimed their millions on Monday. Les Cassidy, who recently left his job as an electrical supervisor, said he and his wife had health problems over the past year, so the money comes at the perfect time.

He said they plan to live just as before, but admitted his wife is looking forward to buying new bed linens and towels — and an Alaskan cruise could be in the cards.

He said his first reaction when hearing about the win was to go outside for some fresh air but he was soon able to clear his head. "I already won the lottery when I met my wife, so this is just a bonus," he added.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

SIU investigation

Officer in crash avoids charges

A Peel police officer who hit an eight-year-old boy with his cruiser has been cleared of wrongdoing, the Special Investigations Unit says. The boy was injured in Brampton on Nov. 26 when he stepped onto the road from between parked cars. The SIU said the officer didn't have time to avoid the collision. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Deadmau5 'engaged and stuff' to TV star Kat Von D: Reports

When a Mau5 loves a woman. He pops the question on Twitter

It appears the on-again, off-again relationship between electronic recording artist Deadmau5 and reality TV personality and tattoo artist Kat Von D is about to get serious.

The mouse-eared Niagara Falls, Ont.-native who now lives in Toronto, posted a photo of a custom-made diamond ring — adorned with two skulls surrounding the jewel — on Twitter, along with a message for the TV star.

"I can't wait for Christmas so ... Katherine Von Drachenberg, will you marry me?" he tweeted.

A few minutes later, he sent another tweet with a couple of expletives and the statement: "I'm engaged and stuff!"

In late September, Deadmau5 — whose real name is Joel Zimmerman — shared photos of the couple and wrote, "Yeah, I'm (in) love."

But less than a month later, the pair both tweeted that they'd broken up.

"Going to spend a little while screwing my head back on. I guess I'm not cut out for relationships right now.... I'll figure it out. No hard feelings."

Von D tweeted: "Man … Can't say I didn't give it my best. Man, I sure was wrong. But at least he made it a no-brainer to break that off."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Bumpy road to love

- Kat Von D, star of the show LA Ink, made headlines for past relationships with Motley Crue bassist Nikki Sixx and fellow reality-TV star Jesse James, who had been married to Sandra Bullock before they got together.
- Von D and James were engaged early last year, announced they'd split up months later, gave it another try a few weeks later and then broke up again for good.

Exclusively online

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Kat Von D and Deadmau5 are all smiles in September at the iHeartRadio Music Festival in Las Vegas. The two are engaged to be married, reports say. ISAAC BREKKEN/GETTY IMAGES

Let it snow. What are the odds of a white Christmas? About 30%

Snow has been the protagonist in movies and the inspiration for countless songs. And the Grinch would still be stuck at the top of the mountain without it. But will scenes of snowy splendour play out in real life this year?

"I would bet a few loonies that we won't get a white Christmas," said Dave Phillips, senior climatologist with Environment Canada.

Temperatures in Toronto are expected to fall to -6 C this weekend, but the forecast calls for light flurries that will leave only trace amounts of snow.

If that prediction holds, it will be the fourth year the city has been green or brown for the holidays.

"We live in a warmer world," Phillips said.

But the lack of precipitation in the city isn't entirely linked to climate change. "It's one big heat bubble," Phillips said of Toronto, a magnet of heat from people, cars and buildings. "There is a local effect that is our own doing."

Historically, the city's chance of holiday snow was 50-50 in the 1960s and '70s. It has since fallen to about a 30 per cent chance. If we do get snow, the average amount has decreased to four or five centimetres from six or seven. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Bars relieved of birthday math come Jan. 1

The licensee's date for legal drinking is highlighted on this sample driver's licence. The new cards will be issued after Jan. 1 to Ontarians under 19.

CONTRIBUTED

It seems pretty simple, really.

You give your driver's licence to a bartender or bouncer and they do some easy math to figure out if you're old enough to drink.

But when you add in music, a crowd and a full evening of pouring drinks, easy math can become challenging, some say.

"You're in a rush, and you have to look at it and (calculate) the months, and the days and the years," said Justin Warne, a bartender at Honest Lawyer in London, Ont. "It gets annoying."

The province is trying to clear up the fuzzy math at bars and stores that sell tobacco or alcohol.

Effective Jan. 1, driver's licences and identification cards issued to people younger than 19 will display the date when the cardholder reaches legal drinking age. The information — reading "Age 19," followed by a date — will be at the bottom of cards next to the date of birth.

The change is part of the Liberal government's plan "to keep families safe and healthy, at home and on the road." Driver's licences in all other Canadian provinces, except Quebec, already show the date people turn 19, says the Ontario Ministry of Transportation.

Young drivers

150,000

The approximate number of Ontario driver's licences issued each year to people younger than 19.
Source: Ministry of Transportation

The new program comes with a one-time cost of less than $5,000 and is considered a safeguard. It's supported by the anti-tobacco group Not to Kids Coalition and by Mothers Against Drunk Driving, the ministry says.

People younger than 19 with government-issued identification won't need to replace it with the new cards after Jan. 1, but can pay to have it updated.

ANGELA MULLINS/METRO IN LONDON

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Police bias let Pickton keep killing: Inquiry

63 recommendations. Report says the disappearance of sex-trade workers was considered routine

Bias against the poor, aboriginal, drug-addicted sex workers in Vancouver's troubled Downtown Eastside led to a series of failures that allowed serial killer Robert Pickton to hunt unimpeded by police for years, a public inquiry has found.

Commissioner Wally Oppal's 1,448-page report, released Monday, chronicles years of mistakes that allowed Pickton to lure dozens of women to his farm in Port Coquitlam, B.C., with little interference from police and even less concern from the public.

"Put yourself in the shoes of one of the missing and murdered women and think how it would feel if you were ... considered unworthy of attention," said Oppal in a news conference.

RCMP delayed interviewing Robert Pickton, above, because he was "busy" on the farm, a report says.
THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

Among other mistakes, Oppal criticized authorities for being reluctant to accept the possibility of a serial killer, handing the investigation to untrained officers, halting work for months at a time and assuming the disappearances stopped before they did.

He made 63 recommendations, including a regional police force for the greater Vancouver region and policy changes to ensure they reflect the needs of impoverished women.

Oppal also called for more services for sex workers and other vulnerable women, including immediate funding for a 24-hour drop-in centre in the Downtown Eastside for sex workers and a transportation service for women and girls who would otherwise resort to hitchhiking along the so-called Highway of Tears in the province's north.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

This is what a 35-car pileup looks like

A car is caught between two semi trucks Monday in a pileup on a slippery highway near Quebec City that involved more than 35 vehicles. The accident on Highway 40 in Portneuf, Que. involved transport trucks and cars, and multiple collisions that saw some cars hit repeatedly. A number of people sustained minor injuries.
JACQUES BOISSINOT/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Ritalin not for the healthy, journal asserts

An article in the Canadian Medical Association Journal says doctors should consider refusing requests by healthy patients for cognitive-enhancement drugs like those used to treat attention deficit disorder.

Prescription stimulants such as Ritalin and Dexedrine are often used to increase focus, concentration and memory.

Co-author Cynthia Forlini of McGill University in Montreal says there is little evidence that the medications benefit healthy people and their side-effects may cause harm.

She says some studies suggest up to 11 per cent of university students take them.

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Halifax Travel Jan 23/ac	one-way $202
New York Travel Jan 22, 2013 - Jan 29, 2013/ac	$224
Vancouver Travel Jan 24/ac	one-way $288
Orlando Travel Jan 19, 2013 - Jan 28, 2013/ts	$299
Las Vegas Travel Jan 15, 2013 - Jan 22, 2013/ac	$386
Varadero Travel Jan 27 - Feb 3/wg	$405
Cancun Travel Feb 2, 2013 - Feb 9, 2013/dl	$449
Jamaica Travel Jan 21, 2013 - Jan 28, 2013/ts	$527
Punta Cana Travel Jan 7 - Jan 14/ts	$590
Paris Travel Apr 11, 2013 - Apr 19, 2013/ts	$816

Sun Vacations

Orlando Family Special
Air + 7 Nights
$389◊
Orlando Metropolitan Hotel
INCLUDES accom near theme parks. Price per person based on family of 4. Departs Jan 18/ggv/ts.

Cancun Long Stay, Air + 21 Nights $1489
Krystal Cancun
INCLUDES accom in a beachfront resort in Cancun's hotel zone. Departs Jan 9/swg/dl.

Ski Vacations

Vermont 3 Nights + Car $269pp
Golden Eagle Resort
INCLUDES accom near Stowe Mountain and 3-day car rental with unlimited mileage from the Burlington Airport. Travel Jan 14/ggv/pd.
ADD 2-day lift ticket for $196.

Mont Tremblant
4 Nights 4-Star + 3-day Lift Pass $534pp
Tour Des Voyageurs
INCLUDES accom in Village and 3-day lift pass to ski Tremblant. Travel Jan 14/ggv.

All-inclusive Vacations

Puerto Plata 7 Nights 4-Star
$801
Barcelo Puerto Plata
Departs Jan 10/nol/c6.

Varadero 7 Nights 4-Star $739
Hotel Villa Cuba
Departs Jan 3/nol/ts.

El Salvador 7 Nights 4-Star $852
Royal Decameron Salinitas
Departs Jan 17/nol/c6.

Mayan Riviera 7 Nights 4-Star $934
Hacienda Real by Encanto
Departs Jan 17/vth/ts.

Cozumel 7 Nights 4-Star $939
Melia Cozumel
Departs Jan 9/wsv/ws.

Puerto Vallarta 7 Nights 4-Star $972
Canto Del Sol
Departs Jan 7/swg/wg.

Jamaica 7 Nights 4-Star $1155
Sunset Jamaica Grande
Departs Jan 21 /swg/wg.

Canada & USA

Niagara Falls
Christmas Family Special, 2 Nights
$44◊ pp
Crowne Plaza Niagara Falls
INCLUDES accom on Falls Ave attached to an indoor waterpark. Price per person based on family of 4. Travel Dec 24/ggv. UPGRADE to 4-star Sheraton on the Falls for $6 per night. BOOK this package based on double occupancy for $90.

Las Vegas Air + 3 Nights $422
The Quad
INCLUDES accom on The Strip. Departs Jan 12/wsv/ws.
UPGRADE to 4-star Luxor Las Vegas for $8 per night.
ADD helicopter tour for $98.

New York Air + 3 Nights $494
Manhattan at Times Square
INCLUDES Manhattan accom. Departs Jan 22/ggv/aa.
UPGRADE to 4-star Andaz Wall Street for $16 per night. ADD TV and movie sites tour for $42.

Vancouver Air + 3 Nights $714
Empire Landmark Hotel
INCLUDES downtown accom. Departs Jan 14/ggv/ws.
UPGRADE to 4-star Sheraton Vancouver Wall Centre for $18 per night.

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Hollywood hacker gets 10 years

Operation Hackerazzi. Man sentenced after year-long investigation into hacking of celebrity accounts

Scarlett Johansson GETTY IMAGES FILE

A U.S. federal judge on Monday sentenced a man who hacked into the personal online accounts of Scarlett Johansson, Mila Kunis and other women to 10 years in prison.

U.S. District Judge S. James Otero sentenced Christopher Chaney in Los Angeles after hearing from a tearful Johansson in a videotaped statement.

The biggest spectacle in the case was the revelation that nude photos taken by Johansson herself and meant for her then-husband Ryan Reynolds were placed on the Internet.

Chaney, 35, of Jacksonville, Fla., pleaded guilty to counts that included wiretapping and unauthorized access to a computer.

Chaney also targeted two women he knew, sending nude pictures of one former co-worker to her father.

The women, who both knew Chaney, said their lives have been irreparably damaged by his actions. One has anxiety and panic attacks; the other is depressed and paranoid. Both say Chaney was calculated, cruel and creepy.

Their accounts as cyber victims serve as a cautionary tale for those who snap personal, and sometimes revealing photos.

Christina Aguilera said in a statement issued days before the sentencing that although she knows that she's often in the limelight, Chaney took from her some of the private moments she shares with friends.

"That feeling of security can never be given back and there is no compensation that can restore the feeling one has from such a large invasion of privacy," Aguilera said.

Prosecutors said Chaney illegally accessed the email accounts of more than 50 people in the entertainment industry between November 2010 and October 2011.

Aguilera, Kunis and Johansson agreed to have their identities made public with the hopes that the exposure about the case would provide awareness about online intrusion. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas ... in Singapore

A woman poses for a photograph with a Christmas tree on display at Orchard Road on Monday in Singapore. CHRIS MCGRATH/GETTY IMAGES

France. Actor Depardieu fuels tax-exile debate

French President Francois Hollande is saluting entrepreneurs who set up businesses in the country amid a fierce debate about whether high taxes are leading wealthy French to leave.

Hollande's plans to raise a slew of new taxes, including a 75 per cent bracket for revenue of more than one million euros, have raised grumbles.

The debate intensified when actor Gerard Depardieu announced he had moved to tax-friendly Belgium and would renounce his French citizenship.

Prime Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault called the move "pathetic," but Hollande wouldn't cast aspersions.

Instead, in a speech Monday, he said: "I want to salute the values of those who no doubt have lots but agree to pay their taxes in France, to produce in France, to create jobs in France, to serve their country." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Newfoundland. Province OKs hydroelectric project

The government of Newfoundland and Labrador says it will proceed with development of the multibillion-dollar Muskrat Falls hydroelectric project.

Premier Kathy Dunderdale, speaking at the provincial legislature Monday in St. John's, said the decision marks a significant day in the province's history.

The development is a joint venture between Newfoundland Crown corporation Nalcor Energy and Nova Scotia private utility company Emera.

It would involve the construction of a dam and power station in Labrador, transmission lines on the island of Newfoundland and a 180-kilometre subsea link that would transmit electricity from southwestern Newfoundland to Cape Breton. It is expected to begin generating power in 2017 and is estimated to cost between $7.5 billion and $7.7 billion. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Gun control. Debate simmers as Democrats call for ban on assault rifles

A U.S. senator and lifelong member of the National Rifle Association became the most prominent gun rights advocate to speak out after last week's school shooting, saying Monday it was time for the debate to move beyond political rhetoric and begin an honest discussion about reasonable restrictions on guns.

As many gun-rights advocates and politicians remained silent, the killing of 20 children as young as six years old led conservative Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin to speak out Monday.

"Never before have we seen our babies slaughtered. It's never happened in America that I can recall, seeing this carnage," Manchin told MSNBC. "Anybody that's a proud gun owner, a proud member of the NRA, they're also proud parents, they're proud grandparents. They understand this has changed where we go from here."

The self-described "proud outdoorsman and hunter" added, "I don't know anyone in the sporting or hunting arena that goes out with an assault rifle, I don't know anybody who needs 30 rounds in a clip to go hunting."

Democrats say the "meaningful action" Obama has spoken of in the wake of last week's shooting must include a ban on the military-style assault weapons and a look at how the country deals with individuals suffering from serious mental illness.

Gun control was a hot topic in the early 1990s, when Congress enacted a 10-year ban on assault weapons. But since that ban expired in 2004, few Americans have wanted stricter laws, and politicians say they don't want to become targets of a powerful gun rights lobby. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Speaking out

- **Connecticut Sen. Joe Lieberman** said it was time to take a deeper look into the recent series of mass shootings.
- **Sen. Dianne Feinstein** said she will introduce legislation next year to ban new assault weapons.
- **New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg** said Obama could use executive powers to enforce existing gun laws.

Tasha Devoe, left, of Lawrence, Mass., joins a march to the National Rifle Association headquarters on Capitol Hill in Washington, Monday. Curbing gun violence will be a top priority of President Barack Obama's second term, aides say. MANUEL BALCE CENETA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Students embrace while wearing Newtown school sweaters outside the funeral for six-year-old student shooting victim Jack Pinto in Newtown, Conn., Monday. Friday's shooting has brought the gun control debate in the U.S. to a boiling point. CHARLES KRUPA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Students mourn slain classmates

Connecticut shooting. Gunman's motive still unknown, but investigators believe he attended Sandy Hook

Coping with fear

"I don't want to see my kids go to schools that become maximum-security fortresses. That's not the world I want to live in, and that's not the world I want to raise them in." Noah Pozner mourner Ray DiStephan

The Connecticut town shattered by last week's school massacre held its first two funerals Monday, as officials weren't sure whether the school itself would ever reopen. Nervous students and teachers across the U.S. returned to classrooms under tighter security.

Family, friends and townspeople streamed out of two funeral homes after saying goodbye to Jack Pinto, who loved the New York Giants football team, and Noah Pozner, who liked to figure out how things worked mechanically. Friends and loved ones headed for two cemeteries afterward.

In front of the funeral home where relatives were mourning Noah, well-wishers placed two teddy bears, a bouquet of white flowers and a single red rose at the base of a maple tree. Hymns rang out from inside the funeral home where Jack's service was being held. "The message was: You're secure now. The worst is over," one mourner, Gwendolyn Glover, said.

The boys were being buried a day after the small community of Newtown came together for a vigil where President Barack Obama said he will use "whatever power" he has to prevent similar massacres.

"What choice do we have?" he said. "Are we really prepared to say that we're powerless in the face of such carnage, that the politics are too hard?"

Investigators have offered no motive for the shooting, and the Connecticut community is struggling to comprehend what drove 20-year-old Adam Lanza to shoot to death his mother at home in bed Friday morning, drive her car to the school and unleash gunfire on six adults and 20 children.

Obama has given no specifics on what he might do, and White House spokesman Jay Carney on Monday warned that "no single piece of legislation or action will fully address the problem." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Blogger fears her son could be the next Adam Lanza

Raising awareness. Mother who blogs about mental illness says it's time to open up the conversation

JESSICA SMITH
jessica.smith@metronews.ca

Authorities have identified Adam Lanza, pictured, as the gunman who killed his mother and then opened fire inside an elementary school in Newtown, Conn., killing 26 people. Blogger Liza Long is raising awareness about mental illness through blog posts about her mentally ill son, and in a particularly controversial post entitled "I am Adam Lanza's mother." BARBARA FREY/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Liza Long wrote in a blog post, "I am Adam Lanza's mother," and shared her solidarity with the mothers of gunmen responsible for America's mass shootings.

She isn't Adam Lanza's mother. Lanza killed his mother Nancy in her bed Friday morning before he shot and killed six adults and 20 children in Connecticut.

Long's son is 13, mentally ill and violent, she wrote. Her blog post about her fear of her son and fears about his future was picked up by numerous websites, including Gawker, where it has been viewed more than three million times.

"I live with a son who is mentally ill. I love my son. But he terrifies me," she wrote. "A few weeks ago, Michael pulled a knife and threatened to kill me and then himself after I asked him to return his overdue library books."

"I managed to get the knife from Michael, then methodically collected all the sharp objects in the house into a single Tupperware container that now travels with me. Through it all, he continued to scream insults at me and threaten to kill or hurt me."

She also writes about how there needs to be more resources to help mentally ill children in the U.S., who far too often end up in jail.

"No one wants to send a 13-year-old genius who loves Harry Potter and his snuggle animal collection to jail. But our society, with its stigma on mental illness and its broken health-care system, does not provide us with other options. Then another tortured soul shoots up a fast-food restaurant. A mall. A kindergarten classroom. And we wring our hands and say, 'Something must be done,'" she wrote.

"I agree that something must be done. It's time for a meaningful, nation-wide conversation about mental health. That's the only way our nation can ever truly heal."

Long and her parenting skills, which she has blogged about for years, have also been sharply criticized, particularly for exposing her son to the attention of the world.

On the The Roz & Mocha Show on Toronto's KiSS 92.5 Long said her son is currently in an acute care facility.

Hollywood makes content changes after shooting

Hollywood is responding to the Connecticut school shooting rampage by switching schedules, adding disclaimers, delaying a film opening and presenting a sombre lineup of daytime TV specials.

Several daytime talk shows responded with shows Monday dedicated to Friday's shooting in Newtown, Conn. They include Katie, Dr. Oz, Dr. Phil and The Doctors.

The shows are often taped well in advance.

Showtime gave viewers a special warning of violence before the season finales of Dexter and Homeland on Sunday. The TLC network is delaying a special called Best Funerals Ever.

The Film Society of Lincoln Center cancelled Monday's screening of Tom Cruise's violent new movie, Jack Reacher.

Jamie Foxx, one of the industry's biggest stars, said Saturday as he promoted Quentin Tarantino's upcoming ultra-violent spaghetti Western-style film about slavery, Django Unchained, that actors can't ignore the fact that movie violence can influence people.

The Film Society of Lincoln Center cancelled Monday's screening of Tom Cruise's violent new movie, Jack Reacher. PARAMOUNT PICTURES/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

"We cannot turn our back and say that violence in films or anything that we do doesn't have a sort of influence," Foxx said in an interview. "It does."

Tarantino said he was tired of defending his films each time the U.S. is shocked by gun violence. He said "tragedies happen" and blame should fall on those guilty of the crimes.

Fox pulled new episodes of Family Guy and American Dad that were to air Sunday to avoid potentially sensitive content. The originally scheduled episode of Family Guy had Peter telling his own version of the nativity story. The American Dad episode told the story of a demon that punished naughty children at Christmas. Both series plan to substitute reruns.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Language spat delays election-shooting case

Attack on Parti Québécois. Richard Henry Bain refuses to receive psychiatric assessment from French-speaking doctor

The man charged in Quebec's election-night shooting has refused to speak to a French-speaking psychiatrist, causing a delay in his case.

Richard Henry Bain was expected to receive the results of his assessment on Monday to determine whether he was fit to stand trial.

But the case was put off until Jan. 11 while the hospital that conducts the evaluation finds a different doctor. Bain will remain at Montreal's Pinel Institute until then.

Stagehand Denis Blanchette was killed and another worker was wounded in the Sept. 4 attack at a downtown club where the Parti Québécois was celebrating its election victory.

Bain faces 16 charges, including first-degree murder; three of attempted murder; arson; and a number of weapons counts. The Crown said Monday the investigation remains open and other charges have not been ruled out.

Bain's court appearance Monday was far less dramatic than his previous one when he delivered a lengthy rant about being sent on a mission by Jesus Christ to rid Quebec of its "separatist problem."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quoted

"I fight for freedom, democracy, justice and to speak one's mother's tongue."

Richard Henry Bain told the court during his earlier Dec. 7 hearing.

Quebec Premier Pauline Marois told a TV show recently she believes she was the target of the election-night attack. BEBETO MATTHEWS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Canadian on death row. Foreign affairs minister requests clemency

The Canadian government has sent a letter to Montana's governor requesting that he spare the life of death row inmate Ronald Smith.

The Dec. 10 letter from Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird to Montana's outgoing Gov. Brian Schweitzer is almost identical to one sent to the Montana Board of Pardons and Parole a year ago prior to the Alberta man's clemency hearing. It makes it clear that the Federal Court ordered the federal government to support Smith's case for clemency.

"The government of Canada requests that you grant clemency to Mr. Smith on humanitarian grounds," writes Baird. "The government of Canada does not sympathize with violent crime and this letter should not be construed as reflecting a judgment on Mr. Smith's conduct."

Smith has been on death row since admitting he murdered Thomas Running Rabbit and Harvey Madman Jr. near East Glacier, Mont., in 1982.

The Harper government initially refused to back Smith's calls for clemency, saying he was convicted in a democratic country. But the Federal Court ruled Ottawa must follow a long-standing practice of lobbying on behalf of Canadians sentenced to death in other countries.

Ronald Smith THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

The Montana Board of Pardons and Parole recommended against granting clemency to Smith. The matter is now in the hands of Schweitzer, a two-term Democrat, who is to officially leave office in a matter of weeks.

Schweitzer hasn't commented since the clemency hearing, but earlier indicated he didn't want to leave a decision up to his successor.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Federal election results

Lawyers wrap up arguments in robocalls case

The electoral fates of six Conservative MPs, once strictly the purview of Canadian voters, landed in the hands of a judge Monday as lawyers on both sides of the so-called robocalls case wrapped up their arguments.

It now falls to Federal Court Judge Richard Mosley to decide whether the evidence merits the drastic step of throwing out the results of last year's federal election in the six ridings in question.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Human remains in bag

Cape Breton police expect more arrests in homicide

Police in Cape Breton say more arrests are expected in the gruesome case of a young woman whose remains were found in a hockey bag in May.

On Sunday, police confirmed that a second man — 37-year-old Brian Augustine Deruelle of Glace Bay — was arrested and charged with accessory after the fact in the death of 21-year-old Laura Catherine Jessome. On Saturday, police laid the same charge against Robert Edwin Matheson, 49, also from Glace Bay. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Easy-Bake Oven for both boys and girls on the way

Gender-neutral. Hasbro decided to come up with latest oven after meeting with U.S. teen

Hasbro says it will soon reveal a gender-neutral Easy-Bake Oven after meeting with a New Jersey girl who started a campaign calling on the toy maker to make one that appeals to all kids.

Thirteen-year-old McKenna Pope of Garfield, N.J., met on Monday with officials at the company's Pawtucket, R.I., headquarters.

It was there that they showed off a prototype of their newest Easy-Bake. It's black, silver and blue, rather than purple and pink.

McKenna says the company is doing everything she asked, including putting boys in the ads. Hasbro says it's been working on the new colour scheme for about 18 months. It says it could be on store shelves next summer.

An online petition McKenna started got support from celebrity chefs, including Bobby Flay.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Hasbro's famous Easy-Bake Oven. An eighth-grade girl from Garfield, N.J., has started an online petition asking Pawtucket, R.I.-based Hasbro to make the toy ovens in gender-neutral colours. STEPHAN SAVOIA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Badges. U.S. judge mulls whether school can force student to use tracking ID

A U.S. federal judge is mulling whether a Texas high school that requires students to wear tracking badges can remove students who refuse to comply.

U.S. District Judge Orlando Garcia on Monday didn't immediately decide whether San Antonio's Northside school district has the right to transfer 15-year-old Andrea Hernandez to another campus.

The sophomore is refusing to join 4,200 other students wearing mandatory student IDs implanted with tracking chips.

Administrators say the chips make students safer and will help boost attendance records that are used to calculate badly needed state funding.

Hernandez is suing to stop the district from forcing her to change schools. Her family says the badge is a "mark of the beast" that goes against their religion.

A ruling could come later this week.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

On the web

For more local news go to metronews.ca

Lawsuit

Massachusetts fines Morgan Stanley

Massachusetts officials say they are fining investment bank Morgan Stanley $5 million for disclosing a revenue shortfall with analysts and institutional investors but not the general public ahead of Facebook's troubled IPO in May.

Facebook filed amended documents on May 9 with securities authorities, but Morgan Stanley organized phone calls with analysts to relay revenue figures that the amendments didn't include. Those numbers were lower than what many analysts had expected.

Massachusetts' Secretary of the Commonwealth, William Galvin, announced the fine Monday. In a press release, Galvin said Morgan Stanley's "improper influence" was "yet another example of an unlevel playing field, where Main Street investors were put at a significant disadvantage to Wall Street." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tainted burgers

E. coli strain blamed for five illnesses

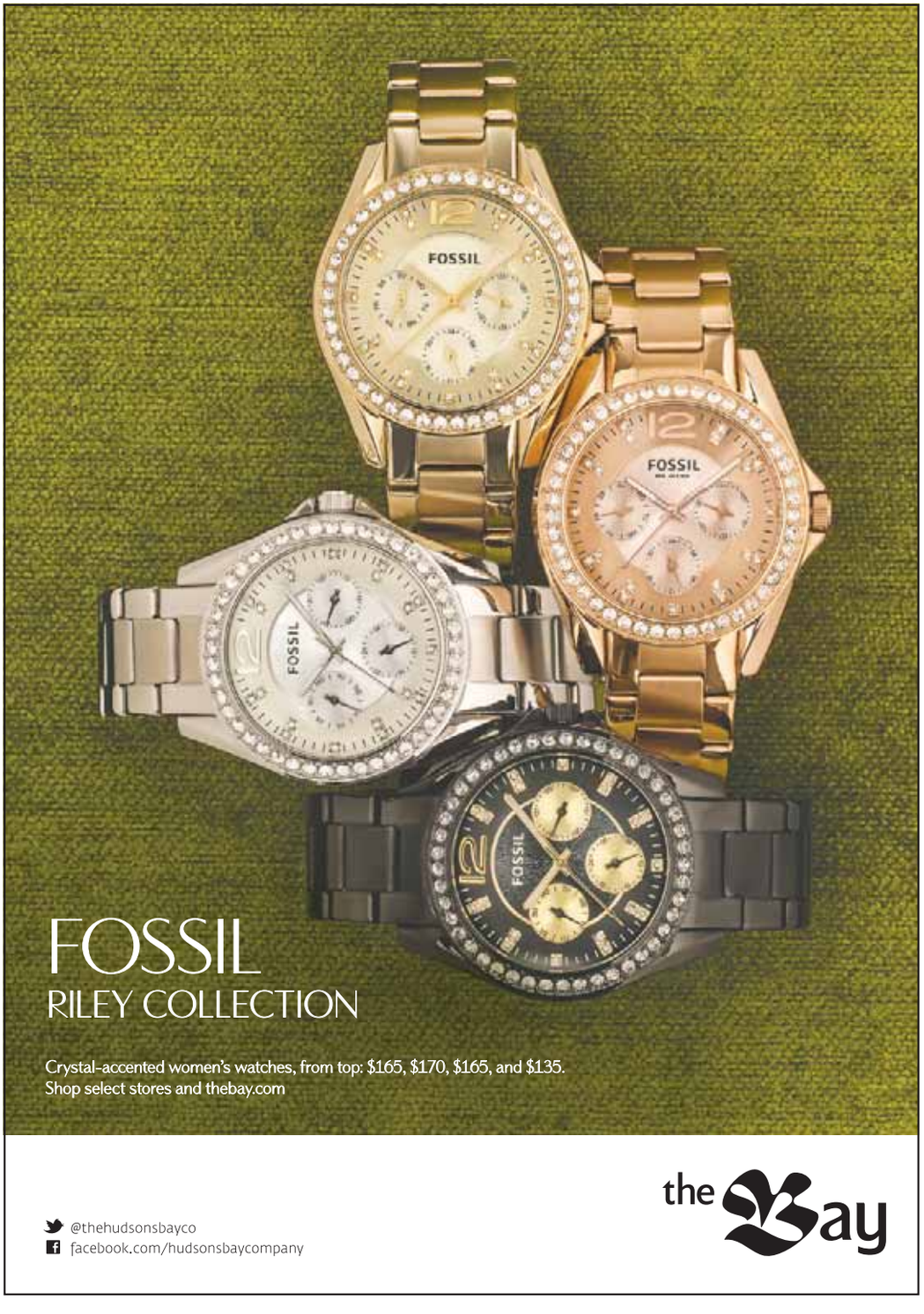
Government inspectors say the strain of E. coli bacteria found in a batch of Butcher's Choice beef burgers is the same one that has made at least five people sick in Ontario and Quebec.

The Public Health Agency of Canada has linked the five cases of E. coli infection to Butcher's Choice brand Garlic Peppercorn Beef Burgers, sold at Loblaw stores across Canada.

Officials say the frozen burgers have been completely recalled from the market.

The agency has also recalled two other beef burger products, but it now says those burgers have not been found to have infected anyone.

The beef in question was produced by Cardinal Meat Specialists Ltd. in Brampton. THE CANADIAN PRESS



After eight months, mom has her missing kids back for Christmas

Reunited. Horror began in April when her children were not returned from a trip to her native Zimbabwe

Biatra Muzabazi is able to smile with children Shane, 4, and Rene, 7. RENE JOHNSTON/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

A Toronto mom reunited with her two kids after eight months broke down Monday as she thanked those who helped bring the family back together in time for the holidays.

Biatra Muzabazi said she thought she would never get her boy and girl back from Zimbabwe, where they had gone on vacation in April but not returned.

Police allege family members hid the pair at a Zimbabwean boarding school.

"I never thought (I'd see) my children again," Muzabazi said, clutching her kids and choking back tears.

"You made it possible for me to be with my children for Christmas."

Det.-Const. Shari Nevills, the lead investigator, said it was a steep learning curve dealing with Zimbabwean laws.

"I had several moments when I really didn't think these kids were coming home," Nevills said.

Police decided the best way to effect a possible return was to send Muzabazi to Zimbabwe, even raising the money to help make that happen.

Muzabazi's mother, who lives in the southern African country, helped obtain needed documentation and Zimbabwean authorities accepted the children belonged with their mother in Canada.

However, the paternal family wasn't ready to turn them over.

At one point, as Muzabazi waited outside the boarding school, a family member took the kids and fled.

Running out of money, the distraught mother said she was on the verge of giving up and returning to Canada without her children.

Then, the Canadian embassy in Harare called her last week to say the children had been dropped off there.

"I just started crying. I couldn't believe it," she said.

As the wide-eyed young ones clutched their mother and watched the throng of news people, Muzabazi said her daughter still appears fretful about any separation.

"She just can't go far away from me," Muzabazi said. "She just wants to be with me all the time."

A criminal investigation was ongoing, police said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Background

Kids kept a world away

The saga began in April, when Rene, 7, and Shane, 4, went for a visit to Muzabazi's native Zimbabwe, something that had occurred several times before without incident.

This time, however, the divorced mother began to worry when the children, who were born in Mississauga, were not returned to Canada as scheduled.

Instead, paternal family members placed the kids in a Zimbabwean boarding school, which actively hid them from local authorities, police allege. In September, the worried mother approached Toronto police.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Nova Scotia

Grade 3 teacher convicted of sex offences resigns

A Nova Scotia school board is going to pay the bill for a judicial review that involved an ex-Grade 3 teacher who was convicted of committing indecent acts.

He pleaded guilty to sexual offences but an arbitrator decided he should get his job at an elementary school in New Germany back, and that decision was upheld by a court. However, in a settlement with the board Peter Speight has agreed to resign and will lose his teaching licence in Nova Scotia as part of the deal.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

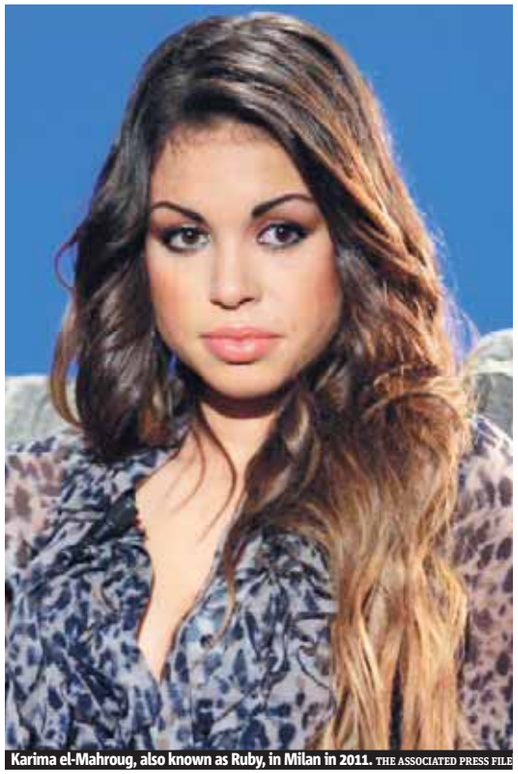
Splitting up in Brazil

New law makes divorce easier

The number of Brazilians getting divorced is at a record high. According to their statistics agency, more than 350,000 divorces occurred in 2011, up 46 per cent from 2010.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Court fines Moroccan woman



Karima el-Mahroug, also known as Ruby, in Milan in 2011. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Italy. Main witness failed to appear at Berlusconi sex trial; prosecution accuses the defence of trying to delay a verdict

A Milan court fined a Moroccan woman at the centre of Silvio Berlusconi's sex-for-hire scandal 500 euros (about $650) on Monday for failing to appear as a witness twice at the former prime minister's trial. It ordered her to testify in January.

Karima el-Mahroug, also known as Ruby, is the last witness to be called in the sensational trial that accuses Berlusconi of having paid for sex with el-Mahroug when she was 17, and then trying to cover it up. Both deny having had sex.

The court ordered el-Mahroug, who is in Mexico on vacation, to testify on Jan. 14, confirming the necessity of her testimony.

Prosecutors have accused the defence, which called el-Mahroug as a witness, of engaging in a strategy to delay a verdict — which has included calling witnesses who have failed to show.

Controversial former Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi, left, recently announced he is engaged to Francesca Pascale, 28, right, who is part of a support group called "Silvio, we miss you." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Italian law does not carry particularly strict penalties against witnesses who fail to appear, and in some cases the court may decide their participation is not essential.

Prosecutors are scheduled to give their closing arguments on Jan. 28, followed by the defence on Feb. 4.

That leaves room for the verdict to be delivered in February, just as Italy is headed toward a national election. The 76-year-old Berlusconi has flirted with running again, but most recently has said he would step aside if Premier Mario Monti, who runs a technical government that replaced Berlusconi's, decides to run as a moderate.

In a weekend interview, Berlusconi apologized for his now-infamous "bunga, bunga" parties, saying he was lonely after having split from his second wife. Veronica Laria left him in 2008, citing alleged dalliances with young women.

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Syria. Assad's loyal vice-president calls for a negotiated settlement

Syria's vice-president has acknowledged that the army cannot defeat the rebel forces trying to topple the regime and called for a negotiated settlement to save the country from ruin.

The rare, candid comments by Farouk al-Sharaa, a longtime close aide to President Bashar Assad's family, suggested his embattled regime may be contemplating an exit strategy as rebel forces move closer to the capital Damascus.

He spoke in an interview published Monday by the Lebanese newspaper Al-Akhbar.

"I don't see that what the security forces and army units are doing will lead to a definitive victory," al-Sharaa was quoted as saying in the interview conducted in Damascus.

Al-Sharaa pushed for a negotiated political settlement that includes the formation of a national unity government with wide jurisdiction.

His comments coincided with a step-by-step peace plan for Syria outlined by Iranian officials on Sunday. It would be capped by Syrian elections.

Those elections presumably could usher in a new leader in Damascus.

Tehran is Assad's closest and perhaps only remaining regional ally and the initiative suggests its embrace of the Syrian president could be cooling.

The initiative is almost certain to be rejected by Syrian rebel factions.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Assad exit strategy?

It was unclear whether al-Sharaa's comments were timed to co-ordinate with the Iranian initiative.

- "Despite his rhetoric, Bashar Assad may now be contemplating an exit strategy — one which would allow him to seek refuge abroad with his neck intact," said Anthony Skinner, an analyst at Maplecroft, a British risk analysis company. A U.S. official said the statement "speaks to the pressure" they're under.

Volcanic ash in Ecuador

A woman sweeps up volcanic ash spewed from the nearby Tungurahua volcano in Banos, Ecuador on Monday. The country's National Geophysics Institute says that a constant plume of gas and ash is rising above the crater, with ash falling. DOLORES OCHOA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Nigeria. Finance minister claims mom's kidnapping linked to fuel subsidy

Nigeria's finance minister on Monday blamed her 83-year-old mother's kidnapping on those angered by the government's decision to stop making some payments for gasoline subsidies, directly linking the abduction to a program that lawmakers have described as a multi-billion dollar scam.

After calling journalists to her office to thank the country for its prayers while her mother was abducted, Minister Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala made the claim that seems to implicate some of the country's top business and political elite. Those are the same people linked to the ruling People's Democratic Party, the party of President Goodluck Jonathan, who appointed the former World Bank official.

Okonjo-Iweala's mother, Kamene Okonjo, was kidnapped Dec. 9 from her hometown of Ogwashi-Uku.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mother released Friday

"They told her that I must get on the radio and television and announce my resignation."

Nigeria's finance minister Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala. On what kidnappers demanded.

Ukraine

Judge and three others beheaded

Ukrainian police are investigating the grisly murder of a judge and three family members whose decapitated bodies were discovered over the weekend in the judge's apartment, officials said Monday.

The beheaded bodies of Judge Volodymyr Trofimov, 58, his wife, son and the son's girlfriend were discovered by the judge's stepson, who came to visit the family Saturday in their home. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Pay bureaucrat for sex injury, court rules

Legal battle. Judges say woman did not require approval, express or implied, for having sex in her motel room

An Australian court has ruled that a bureaucrat who was injured while having sex on a business trip is eligible for worker's compensation benefits.

The Full Bench of the Federal Court ruled Dec. 13 in favour of the woman, who cannot be identified for legal reasons, and rejecting the appeal of the federal government's insurer, ending a five-year legal battle.

The woman was hospitalized after being injured in 2007 during sex with a male friend while staying in a motel in the town of Nowra, 160 kilometres south of her hometown of Sydney.

During the sex, a glass light fitting was torn from its mount above the bed and landed on her face, injuring her nose and mouth. She later suffered depression and was unable to continue working for the government.

Her claim for worker's compensation for her physical and psychological injuries was initially approved by government insurer Comcare, then rejected after further investigation.

An administrative tribunal agreed with Comcare that her injuries were not suffered in the course of her employment, saying the government had not induced or encouraged the woman's sexual conduct. The tribunal also found the sex was "not an ordinary incident of an overnight stay" such as showering, sleeping and eating.

That ruling was overturned in the Federal Court in 2012, when Judge John Nicholas rejected the tribunal's findings that the sex had to be condoned by the government if she were to qualify for compensation.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ruling

"If the applicant had been injured while playing a game of cards ... she would be entitled to compensation even though it could not be said that her employer induced her to engage in such activity."

Australian Federal Court Judge John Nicholas, from his decision in favour of the woman being compensated

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Worker pulled from water tower

Rescuers use ropes to free a man, above, after he fell inside an old water tower in Brooklyn, Mich., on Monday morning. It took rescuers more than two hours to free the man who had been dismantling the water tower, inset, with another worker.

J. SCOTT PARK/JACKSON CITIZEN PATRIOT/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Philippines. Lawmakers pass contraceptive bill over church's objections

Philippine legislators passed a landmark bill Monday that would provide government funding for contraceptives and sexuality classes in schools despite strong opposition by the dominant Roman Catholic Church and its followers, some of whom threatened to ask the Supreme Court to block the legislation.

The Senate and the House of Representatives passed different versions of the bill, which languished in Congress for more than a decade as legislators avoided colliding with the influential church. The two versions will have to be reconciled before President Benigno Aquino III has an opportunity to sign the legislation.

Pregnancies

The UN Population Fund says of the 3.4 million pregnancies in the Philippines every year, half are unintended and a third are aborted, often in clandestine and unsafe procedures.

- The fund says 11 women in the country die of pregnancy-related causes every day. Nearly 70 per cent of women use no contraception at all.

In a scene considered unusual just a few years ago, lawmakers openly defied the church's stand during the plenary voting.

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Cutting workplace 'gender gap' will lead to growth, OECD says

Inequality. Women still earn less than men and are more likely to spend final years in poverty

Governments looking to boost growth should focus on further narrowing the "gender gap" that continues to hold women back in education, employment and entrepreneurship, a new report said Monday.

Women continue to earn less than men, are less likely to make it to the top of the career ladder and are more likely to spend their final years in poverty, according to Closing the Gender Gap, released by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Trimming or eliminating this discrimination could provide a significant source of growth for ailing economies, the OECD says. On average, a 50 per cent decrease in the gender gap in labour force participation would lead to a 0.3 percentage point increase in annual GDP per-capita growth rate in OECD countries.

"Investment in gender equality yields the highest returns of all development investments," the OECD said.

Market Minute

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A key part of the solution is promoting access to affordable child care, the OECD says. "If child care eats up one wage so that there is little or no financial gain in going out to work, parents (most often mothers) are less likely to seek a job," the report says.

While women have largely caught up or surpassed men in education, girls remain less likely to choose scientific and technological fields of study, the OECD said, pointing to a need to change gender stereotypes and attitudes early on.

In the workplace, a "glass ceiling" still inhibits women's earnings and professional advancement, the OECD said.

Women earn on average 16 per cent less than men in OECD countries, and the disparity widens the higher up the corporate ladder women climb: Among female top-earners, women are paid 21 per cent less than male counterparts, the OECD found.

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Governor's summer holiday didn't break conflict rules: BoC

Most boring cottage party ever? Carney vacationed with Liberal finance critic while he was being courted for leadership race

The Bank of Canada tried to quell questions about its governor's impartiality and judgment Monday, saying Mark Carney was not afoul of conflict rules by vacationing in the summer at the cottage of the Liberal finance critic.

The central bank confirmed a weekend report that Carney stayed at Scott Brison's Nova Scotia cottage while key members of the Liberal party were courting him for the leadership.

The Bank of Canada says there was no impropriety in governor Mark Carney's accepting an invite to stay at a cottage belonging to Liberal finance critic Scott Brison. THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

Spokesman Jeremy Harrison said there was nothing improper in the visit, and that bank duties were not discussed.

"The Bank of Canada's general counsel, who is responsible for enforcing the bank's conflict of interest policy, has assessed that this visit does not breach the bank's conflict of interest guidelines in any way," Harrison said.

"Neither the Bank of Canada, nor governor Carney, have an actual or potential commercial or business relationship with Mr. Brison."

Harrison added that Carney and Brison had been friends for about a decade and that the visit to the MP's cottage at Cheverie, N.S., cannot "be defined as partisan or political activity."

Brison confirmed the friendship, which began in 2004 when Carney was an associate deputy finance minister and the Nova Scotia MP was the Liberal public works minister, but refused to elaborate about the visit.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

RIM. Rogers begins orders for 'all-touch' BB10 devices

Rogers Communications says that its current wireless customers are now able to place orders for BlackBerry 10 smartphones.

The new BlackBerry 10 devices on offer will be "all-touch" and won't have the physical keyboard that BlackBerry users are used to typing on. But Rogers won't be providing details on pricing, availability or specifications until early in the new year.

Research In Motion has previously said an "all-touch" version of its new phones would be released first, followed by a model with a physical keyboard shortly afterward.

RIM announced separately that it's giving an invitation-only preview of the BlackBerry 10 to more than 120 select government and private-sector customers in a variety of industries.

The two announcements are part of efforts to build interest in a new generation of BlackBerrys in hopes of reviving the Canadian technology company. The BlackBerry 10 smartphones are seen as make-or-break products for Research In Motion, which has faced intense competition from iPhones and smartphones using the Google Android operating system. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Public consultation

CRTC wants input on 911 service

The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission is asking for ideas on how to improve 911 emergency service in light of changing technology — namely, the telecommunications system's evolution to next-generation networks based on Internet Protocol.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Discount travel

Air Canada to launch new carrier

Air Canada plans to launch its new low-cost airline Tuesday in Toronto. The company gave few details but promised more information would be released at the event. The unnamed discount carrier will focus on leisure destinations in the United States and Caribbean and some routes in Europe. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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IT'S ACTUALLY NOT THE END OF THE WORLD

SHE SAYS...
Jessica Napier
metronews.ca

Do you have all of your affairs in order? Have you told all of your friends and family just how much you love them? Because if the fear-mongers are to be believed, we only have a few days left to say our goodbyes before an apocalyptic end-of-days descends upon us all on Dec. 21.

A fate foretold by hieroglyphs and perpetuated by a terrible John Cusack disaster movie, the Mayan doomsday prophesy represents the end of the Mesoamerican Long Count calendar. This so-called Day of Reckoning will bring about something (although no one is quite sure what exactly) that will mean the end the world as we know it.

Prepping for reality

And yet, despite all the evidence to the contrary (you know, science), people around the world are very into this faux-pocalypse.

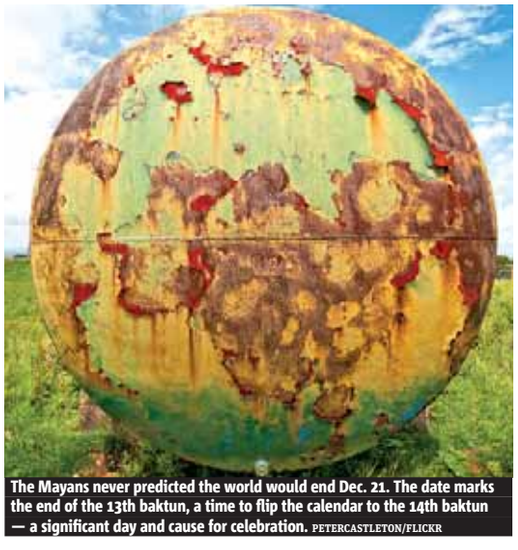
But before you get too nervous about solar flares, catastrophic floods and swarms of killer bees, just stop. NASA went and debunked the whole thing by releasing a video entitled Why the World Didn't End Yesterday, a whole 10 days ahead of schedule. Their official statement is something along the lines of: "Our planet has been getting along just fine for more than four billion years so everybody just relax, OK."

And yet, despite all the evidence to the contrary (you know, science), people around the world are very into this faux-pocalypse. Alarmist bloggers are convincing people to hunker down with canned goods while New Age visionaries are purchasing one-way plane tickets to a remote village in Turkey renowned for its protective energies. And then there's that Chinese farmer who is spending hundreds of thousands of dollars building an ark as a precautionary measure — AN ARK!

I'm tempted to join in on the fun: host a doomsday pity party for myself and listen to Britney Spears' Till the World Ends on repeat while drowning my sorrows in a pint of Häagen-Dazs Mayan Chocolate ice cream. But rationally, we all know that we've got nothing to worry about; we're still buying Christmas presents and making plans for New Year's Eve. I'm actually inclined to think that the whole thing might just be a way for companies to cash in on tasteless apocalypse-blowout-sales and end-of-the-world-themed merchandise.

So even though I love a good conspiracy theory, I think I'll side with our modern-day scientists over an ancient civilization and their 5,125-year-old calendar. However, if your Judgement Day predictions involve a sexy astronaut version of Ben Affleck saving us all from a rogue asteroid, you definitely have my attention.

Follow Jessica Napier on Twitter @MetroSheSays



The Mayans never predicted the world would end Dec. 21. The date marks the end of the 13th baktun, a time to flip the calendar to the 14th baktun — a significant day and cause for celebration. PETERCASTLETON/FLICKR

Do you do takeout?

SOLENT

Culinary world record

World's largest pizza gets served

Five Italian chefs have set a new record for the world's largest pizza, which is a staggering 40 metres in diameter — the length of nearly three buses.

Such was the size of the massive margherita that the chefs in Rome had to bake the dough in 5,234 separate batches over a 48-hour period.

The gargantuan food item is made gluten-free in order to raise awareness about celiac disease, the most frequent food intolerance worldwide.

METRO

What's in a name

"We named the pizza Ottavia (after Roman Emperor Octavian Augustus Caesar) to symbolize the hope of a great economic and cultural revival."

Dovilio Nardi, head of the Italian chef quintet

Too cheesy?

- 8,981 kilograms of gluten-free flour, mixed with 11,274 litres of water
- 4,535 kilograms of tomato sauce
- 675 kilograms of margarine
- 250 kilograms of salt: over 40,000 times an adult's recommended daily allowance
- 3,991 kilograms of cheese
- 100 kilograms of lettuce
- 25 kilograms of balsamic vinegar
- 1,354 litres of yeast

Extra, extra large

23,224

kilograms is the total weight of this prodigious pizza. The colossal size is the same as more than 68,300 regular frozen pizzas put together.
The team broke the previous record, set in 1990 by Norwood Pick 'n Pay hypermarket in South Africa. The former record holder's pizza was made of gluten and measured 37 metres.

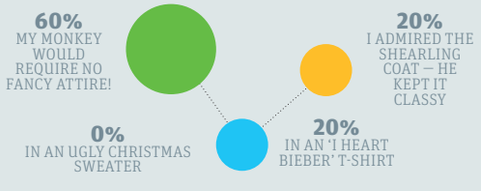
Online

For more of Metro's voices, visit metronews.ca.

Metropolitan Panel

Register at metropolitanpanel.ca and take the quick poll

If you had been the owner of the Ikea monkey, how would you have dressed it for its international debut?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20%
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0%
IN AN UGLY CHRISTMAS SWEATER
20%
IN AN 'I HEART BIEBER' T-SHIRT

Twitter

@Canadagentleman: #CanadaNeeds1D do we? Do we really NEED them here? We NEED oxygen, we NEED maple syrup & beavers... But 1D? I'm not convinced.

@FrankRawBeetz: Can't wait for the upcoming #bluejays season. Finally going for it!

@Morgan_Flood: I wish it was April!! #Bluejays

@Burgicitis: Also, #BlueJays just Blue my mind.

@WhoTheHector: The#ttc where no one gives up their seat no matter how pregnant it disabled you are. #precious#toronto

@WayneMayers: I guess Toronto really does love the BJ's.. They went out and got a #Dickey ! #BlueJays#Toronto#Jays

metro

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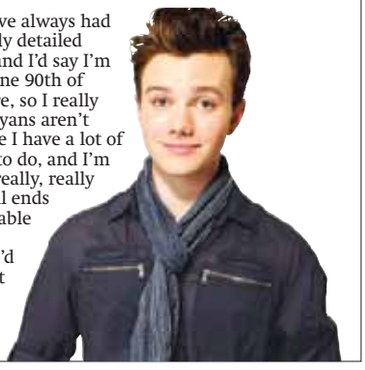
With Dec. 21 fast approaching, we ask a few celebs what they might do if they were faced with the end of the world

NED EHRBAR
Metro World News in Hollywood

CELEBRITY BUCKET LISTS

Chris Colfer (Glee)



You know, I've always had a really, really detailed bucket list, and I'd say I'm only about one 90th of the way there, so I really hope the Mayans aren't right because I have a lot of stuff I want to do, and I'm going to be really, really pissed if it all ends and I'm not able to. If I had a month left, I'd probably just go on a very expensive vacation.

Joel McHale (Community)

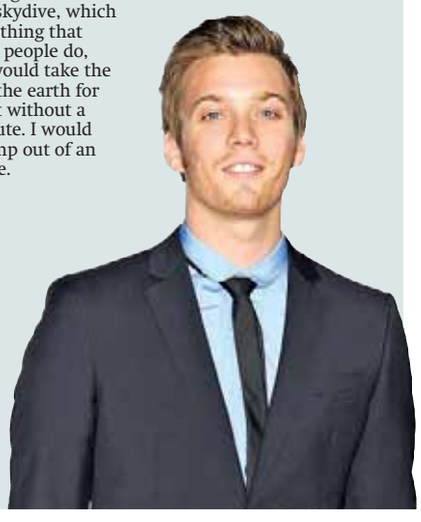
An end of the world bucket list? Yes. A really sturdy bucket.

Maggie Grace (Taken 2)

Honestly, one of my sort of bucket list items I just ticked off. I did a Broadway play for the first time. It was terrifying. But it's something I've wanted to do since I was 11 years old. So I at least checked one off.

Jake Abel (The Host)

If I knew the world was going to end, I would skydive, which is something that normal people do, but it would take the end of the earth for me. But without a parachute. I would just jump out of an airplane.



Teresa Palmer (Warm Bodies)

Oh gosh, end of the world bucket list? Yeah, I would've liked to have had a baby before the end of the world, but there's not really time for that. I'm not sure what I'm going to do. I want to jump out of a plane, for sure. I would just eat so much food, 24/7 just eat and eat and eat. Travel around the world, eating from all different cultures. That'd be amazing.

Kellan Lutz (The Twilight Saga)

No, I don't (have one), because I don't believe the world's going to come to an end. God never gave a date so I don't believe it's going to happen. So there's no need for me to make a plan B with all that. I'm just living my life every day to the fullest.

Week of Armageddon

Check out Metro all week for more stories of apocalyptic proportions.

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It's the end of the world as we know it...

Songs for the apocalypse. Superstar DJ Sam Totolee programs the ultimate last dance playlist

"Of course, I'd feel anxious if the world were about the end," says DJ Sam Totolee, known for setting the beat at celebrity parties hosted by Gwyneth Paltrow, Madonna and Kate Moss. "But you have to surrender to the moment."

"Start off by playing slow and gentle songs, allowing people to relax and embrace the moment."
Nat King Cole, Let's Face the Music and Dance
Ella Fitzgerald, Let's Call the Whole Thing Off
Dusty Springfield, Spooky
Perry Como, Magic Moments
Frank Sinatra, My Way

"In this section, the songs are about living, loving and coming together."
Paul McCartney, Live and Let Die
5th Dimension, The Age of Aquarius
The Beatles, Come Together
The Monkees, I'm a Believer
Bowie, Lets Dance

"Music from the '70s is a funkier groove. I want people to focus on nothing more than dancing and celebrating."
Gloria Gaynor, I Will Survive
Harold Melvin, Don't Leave Me This Way
Michael Jackson, Thriller
Kool & the Gang, Celebration
Tramps, Disco inferno
Jackson Sisters, I Believe in Miracles
Parliament, One Nation Under a Groove

"We're taking a leap forward with tunes from the '80s."
Eurythmics, Must be an Angel
Talkin Heads, Once in a Lifetime
The Jacksons, Can you Feel it
Human League, Together in Electric Dreams
Blondie, Atomic
Bangles, Eternal Flame
Madness, One Step Beyond
George Michael, Freedom

"We need to bring the joy element back into the night."
Status Quo, Rockin All Over the World
AC/DC, Highway to Hell
Queen, We are the Champions

"The indie music is really up-tempo. As we switch from one genre to the other, we're reflecting our emotions."
REM, Losing my Religion
Red Hot Chilli Peppers, I Can't Stop
Killers, Mr. Brightside
Mark Ronson, Oh My God

"The calm before the storm."
Jay Z, 99 Problems
Dr. Dre, Next Episode
DJ Jazzy Jeff & Fresh Prince, Boom! Shake the Room

"Kick things right up again. What you want is total euphoria."
Ke$ha, Tik Tok
Pink, Raise Your Glass
La Roux, Bulletproof

"Just before the world is about to end..."
The Doors, The End

METRO

DJ Totolee, spinning in his grave. CONTRIBUTED

With her hit song, Tik Tok, Ke$ha could help countdown until the end of the world. HANDOUT

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Wiz Khalifa is doing things a little differently on his latest album. GETTY IMAGES

Wiz Khalifa takes his music to a higher level

O.N.I.F.C. Rapper's latest album debuts at No. 2, while he prepares for fatherhood and marriage

Rapper Wiz Khalifa says preparation for becoming a first-time father and husband has helped put him in a more mature musical state of mind.

But that doesn't mean Khalifa will refrain from his weed-smoking, rock-star-like ways.

"I'm at a different point in my life," said Khalifa, whose sophomore album, O.N.I.F.C., debuted at No. 2 on Billboard's 200 albums chart this week with 141,000 copies sold, according to Nielsen Scan.

"I just want to say things a little bit differently and express myself on another level on the album," he continued. "I have new responsibilities, but I'm always going to smoke weed and enjoy myself. My son is going to love me for the same reasons others do. I'm not just going to turn into some old fart."

For the 25-year-old Khalifa, life is just getting started. He and his fiancée, Amber Rose, who is in the third trimester of her pregnancy, are expected to get married at a courthouse in a few weeks.

Khalifa said he and Rose — an ex-girlfriend of Kanye West — want to marry before the birth of their son. He said they will hold a traditional wedding ceremony later with family and friends.

"There's a lot of excitement going on," the Pittsburg-based rapper said. "I just worked my (butt) off and tried to be better every day. I've just tried to move forward naturally."

Rose, a model and rapper, appears on Khalifa's new album. It also features Pharrell, 2 Chainz and the Weeknd, who appears on the current single Remember You. The first single, Work Hard, Play Hard, is a platinum Top 20 hit.

While the album is finally out, Khalifa and his record label, Atlantic Records, initially struggled over the creative process for O.N.I.F.C., which stands for Only N-word in First Class.

He said his label wanted him to focus on producing big hits, similar to his omnipresent jam Black and Yellow, which skyrocketed to the top of charts and helped previous album, Rolling Papers, sell nearly 200,000 copies in the first week last year and eventually reach gold status.

Khalifa felt otherwise, saying there was a lack of communication between himself and label executives.

"I had less freedom to be creative, but it's all about communication," he said. "Business-wise, people want to compare. That's the main thing you have to get over. "

Khalifa calls the experience a test.

"You're either going to let it destroy you, be bigger than you or you be bigger than it," he said. "You have to go through conflict and disagreement. You can't shut down. You have to really be about your business, your money. If you quit, the label is not (quitting). They're going to keep going and make money. You do, too."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jingle, jingle! Add some rhythm to your holiday shopping

PAT HEALY
Metro in Boston

5 books for music lovers

1 How Music Works

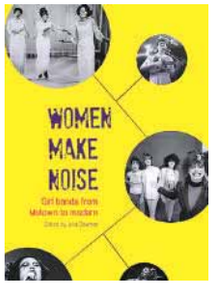
David Byrne

Talking Heads frontman David Byrne spends the bulk of his writing exploring, not explaining, music. To juggle his personal and professional commitments, the tone leaps between memoir, history lesson, advice column and philosophical exegesis. This format makes for a lively argument, complete with arty flourishes (the page numbers, you'll notice, are backward).

2 Women Make Noise: Girl Bands from Motown to Modern

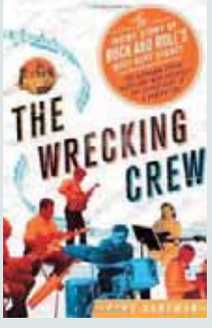
Edited by Julia Downes

This collection of essays by journalists, fans, musicians and industry people celebrates the under-recognized history of all-girl rock bands. Beginning with groups like the Supremes and the Ronettes, the scope extends to the present day, covering punk rockers such as the Slits and the experimental pop music of Björk.



3 The Wrecking Crew: The Inside Story of Rock and Roll's Best-Kept Secret

By Kent Hartman

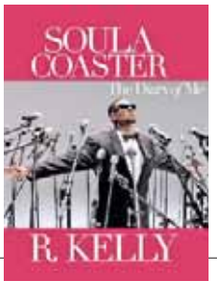


Studio musicians are a humble lot. While stars steal the glory, these poor souls rarely get more than a nod in the liner notes. This book documents the group of Los Angeles session musicians who, in the 1960s, created some of the decade's best music. You can hear the Wrecking Crew, the name given to the dozens of players by drummer Hal Blaine, on albums by the Beach Boys, Simon & Garfunkel, and others.

4 Soulacoaster: The Diary of Me

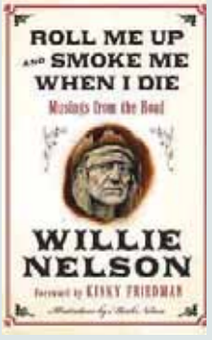
By R. Kelly

Equal parts genius, joker and sex-fiend, R. Kelly is a complicated man. Even though he tries to isolate these three components of his being, they inevitably spill into each other, ultimately making Kelly the compelling pop star that he is. This hilariously titled memoir is a bizarre ride through Kelly's crazy life, from Chicago's South Side to the penthouse to the courtroom to the set of his insane Trapped In The Closet.



5 Roll Me Up and Smoke Me When I Die: Musings from the Road

By Willie Nelson



If one day someone really rolls up Willie Nelson's corpse and smokes it, it will probably taste like whiskey, denim and an old, battered guitar. This memoir is as rambling as you'd expect, with details of the highwayman's life blown out in disorienting fragments stitched together in no discernible order. Scattered but vivid, it is an earnest account of a cloudy life on the road.

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Judd Apatow's films are a family affair

This is 40. Director's biggest worry when working with his kids on set is preventing a revolt from happening

NED EHRBAR
Metro World News in Hollywood

Judd Apatow, left, claims he has to make his sets fun for his kids when he's directing them in his films. HANDOUT

This is 40 marks the third time Judd Apatow has directed his wife, Leslie Mann, and their two daughters, Maude and Iris, following Knocked Up and Funny People. But with the girls getting older, the writer-director is giving them more to do on screen — something he admits can backfire while filming. We sat down with Apatow to discuss the family working dynamic.

When you're directing your own children, is there a sort of loophole around the usual Hollywood laws for child labour?

There isn't, really. In fact, it works the other way because I look like a jerk in front of the crew if I do anything that seems like pushing with my kids. I have to be very polite — a kiss-ass, really — so there isn't a revolt on the set. I was always afraid that they would just get bored or tired and want to go home, and I would be stuck in this position of saying, "You're not allowed to go home, you're at work." So I worked very hard to make it fun for them so they wanted to stay on the set. And they did. In real life, at that time they had a lot of sibling rivalry, and as a result of having to play out all these scenes together where they fight really hard, I think they've seen it from another angle and ever since we shot the movie, they've gotten along really well.

Are they at all worried that as they grow up they'll be the subject of more of your movies?

We haven't talked about it. They're at that age where every six months they're completely different people, so there's not that much long-range thinking going on. They had a really good time making the movie, they're proud of it, they're having their first real experience of what it's like putting a movie out into the world that they're proud of, but they don't have any plans about acting. They have enough trouble with math and biology.

Was there any effort to get Katherine Heigl involved for at least a cameo?

I just thought honestly about where everybody would be five years later. It would make sense to me that (Heigl's character) Allison got a job somewhere else working at a TV station. They're probably in Atlanta or something like that, Seth and Katherine. I didn't want to bring a lot of people back because I wanted this to be its own world.

2012 a diverse year for gamers

The video game universe in 2012 is a study in extremes. At one end, you have the old guard striving to produce mass-appeal blockbusters. At the other end, you have a thriving community of independent game developers scrambling to find an audience for their idiosyncratic visions. Can't we all just get along? Here are 10 games that managed to do both.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dishonored

Arkane Studios' revenge drama combined a witty plot, crisp gameplay and an uncommonly distinctive milieu.

Mass Effect 3

No 2012 game was more ambitious than BioWare's sweeping space opera. Yes, the ending was a little bumpy, but the fearless Commander Shepard's last journey across the cosmos provided dozens of thrilling moments.

The Walking Dead

This moving adaptation of Robert Kirkman's comics dodged the predictable zombie bloodbath in favour of a finely tuned character study of two survivors.

Journey

A nameless figure trudges across a desert toward a glowing light. Simple enough, but gorgeous visuals and haunting music translate into something that's almost profound.

Borderlands 2

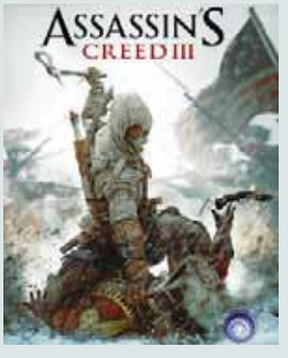
A gleeful mash-up of first-person shooting, role-playing and loot-collecting conventions gets bigger and badder, but what stuck with players most were the often hilarious encounters with the damaged citizens of Pandora.

Fez

A two-dimensional dude named Gomez finds his world has suddenly burst into a third dimension in this gem from indie developer Phil Fish.

ZombiU

The best launch game for Nintendo's new console turns the Wii U's GamePad into an effective tool for finding and hunting down the undead.



Assassin's Creed III

A centuries-old conspiracy takes root in Colonial America in this beautifully realized, refreshingly irreverent installment of Ubisoft's alternate history franchise.

Spec Ops: The Line

This harrowing tale from German studio Yager Development transplants Apocalypse Now to a war-torn Dubai. It's a bracing critique, not just of war but of the rah-rah jingoism of contemporary military shooters.

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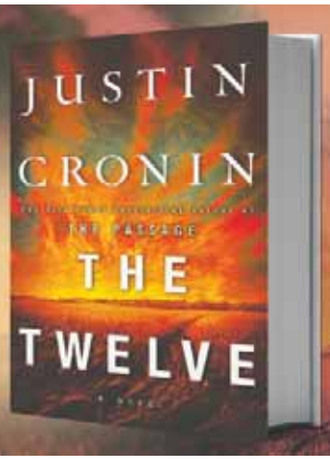

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Vancouver-born actress plays ‘feisty, sexy and disarming’ role

Kristin Lehman.
Procedural drama Motive is told from the perspective of the killer and victim

STEPHEN ERAMO
scene@metronews.ca

She recently portrayed Gwen Eaton, a campaign adviser with a bone to pick with her secret lover in the critically lauded murder mystery The Killing. Now, Vancouver-born actress Kristin Lehman is taking on the lead role in CTV’s new police procedural drama Motive.

Described as “feisty, sexy and disarming,” her character of Angie Flynn is a divorced single mom and homicide detective who investigates cases that are told from the perspective of the killer as well as victim. This particular job came along at the ideal time for Lehman.

“I was very lucky to have done The Killing, and when we wrapped last April, I wanted to do more equally creatively satisfying work,” notes the actress.

“I also wanted to stay in Vancouver, largely because my little boy is in pre-school here and we really built our family’s life around being in town for the series.

“So when I heard that Motive was a CTV show I was really excited about the possibility of doing another Canadian series. Then I read the material and fell in love with it. So I auditioned and, like every audition, I was convinced it wasn’t what they [the producers] wanted,” she jokes, “but happily it was what they wanted and here I am.”

Despite being very different from her character, the actress felt an immediate bond with Angie.

“It’s just an absolute delight to step into her shoes,” says Lehman.

“Angie ‘lives’ in me quite naturally, and thanks to our writers I get to delve into the complexities of what it must be like to have such a difficult job as well as be impulsive, instinctive, say what you feel and make mistakes.”

Kristin Lehman is taking on the lead role in Motive. HANDOUT

At the time of this interview, Lehman and the rest of the Motive cast and crew were slightly over halfway through filming the show’s first season.

“Aidan Devine guest-stars in this episode and he is an acting powerhouse,” praises the actress.

“I suppose I’m enjoying this one, in particular, because Angie has a really strong connection with the main protagonist. She decides to go against her superiors’ wishes and follow her own hunches, so Aidan and I have gone toe-to-toe with some pretty intense and heavy scenes.

“At the end of the day you feel proud of all the effort you’ve put in as well as having worked opposite and shared a lot of mutual respect with another actor who processes the same way you do.”

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METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

Oops! I did it again? Break up talk circulates for Britney and beau

Jason Trawick and Britney Spears

Britney Spears' relationship with Jason Trawick may be about to end, though the X Factor host and pop star is apparently the last to know, according to Hollyscoop.

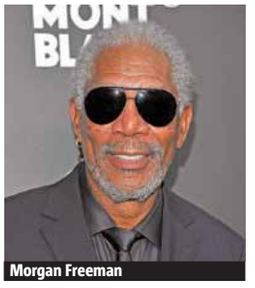
"Jason has told Britney's entire family that he's planning to leave her so Britney will have a support system when he breaks the bad news," a source says of the couple, who are reportedly spending the holidays apart. Trawick is said to be waiting until Spears' work on the current season of the X Factor is wrapped before dumping her.

Matt Damon sets it straight on his sexual orientation

Matt Damon

Matt Damon has been dodging gay rumours ever since he and best friend Ben Affleck burst on the scene with Good Will Hunting, but he's avoided acknowledging them — until now. "I never denied those rumours because I was offended and didn't want to offend my friends who were gay — as if being gay were some kind of f---ing disease," he tells Playboy magazine. "It put me in a weird position in that sense. The whole thing was just gross."

Newtown tragedy: Morgan Freeman didn't comment


Morgan Freeman

Not so fast, Facebook users. A lengthy quote attributed to Morgan Freeman in the wake of the Newtown, Conn., elementary school shooting tragedy has been making the rounds on the social networking site, suggesting media coverage encouraged the shooter. The only problem is those aren't Freeman's words. "Morgan neither made statements or posted those statements. We are trying to find out who did, but they did not originate from him," a source for the actor tells E! News.

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Last minute holiday health

Fitness. Celebrity trainer Ashley Borden has a Christmas gift for you: expert tips to avoid temptation

ROMINA McGUINNESS
life@metronews.ca

What was the point of kicking yourself into shape last January if you're going to let all your efforts go to waste in the last two weeks of the year?

"You should absolutely indulge during the holidays because if you restrict yourself, you'll only feel deprived and frustrated," Ashley Borden, who trains celebrities including Ryan Gosling, Christina Aguilera and Ke$ha, tells Metro. "The problem is that people tend to adopt an 'all or nothing' attitude and as a result, their fitness and diet completely goes out of the window."

Here's what she'd do in certain situations.

Scenario 1: There is no way I can ditch my family so I can go off and do some exercise.

"I don't believe that because you're with your family, you can't take the time out to workout," says Borden.

"Why would you turn off your life and drop the things that are actually helping you feel good? Many people find dealing with the full family dynamic both stressful and emotional — making it even more important that you set aside an hour or so each day of 'me' time where you can let off some steam.

"It may seem a little selfish, but don't care."

TIP: Focusing on yourself will make you a more productive family member because you'll feel less resentful for being locked in the house stuffing the turkey and chopping up carrots.

Scenario 2: The holidays are about switching off. I don't want to stick to a schedule.

"Normally, people find it easy to stay on track because they follow a set routine. They get up, cycle to work, have breakfast and so on," says Borden. "But during the holidays, because there isn't the same schedule and structure, diet and fitness habits can become very erratic. The assumption is that once it's all over, losing the extra weight and bloat will be easy when deep down we all know we're going to struggle. The key is to not schedule in exercise. Make loose but firm plans — book a spinning class or stock up on fruit and vegetables so you have something to snack on."

TIP: Wake up without an alarm. Have some breakfast before you do a quick 30 minute cardio workout. Once you've done that, you can relax for the rest of the day.

Scenario 3: Festive food is my favourite. I'm going to starve myself all day just so I can stuff my face at dinnertime.

Don't get sucked into the Santarexic habits this month. THINKSTOCK

"Never assume that it's OK to skip meals during the day in order to lash out at Christmas dinner. This kind of behaviour will really screw up your eating patterns," warns Borden.

"Your body can't assimilate and metabolize all these calories at once and that's how you end up gaining weight. It's much easier to eat a normal dinner and allow yourself a bit of indulgence. One slice of cake won't make or break your body."

TIP: On days when you know you're likely to over-eat, try and break a sweat for at least 20 minutes.

Scenario 4: It's impossible to workout in my hotel.

"If you're really stuck at your in-laws in the middle of nowhere, you always have your body weight to use.

Set up a mini circuit in your room — even if you have very little space, you can train for around 30 minutes by doing reverse lunges, planks or pushups.

If you want to do some cardio, pack a jump rope."

TIP: Invest in some resistance bands with handles. And, again, pack a jump rope in your luggage.

Tips to a stress-free holiday

December should be a month of indulgence and happiness — then why is it always a time of conflict and drama? Laura Oates, behavioural psychologist at Harley Therapy in England, tells us how to avoid a mental breakdown.

Sorry, Christmas is not a Kodak moment

"We're expected to believe that as if by magic, we're all going to get on famously. We all wish we had a loving family that peacefully opened their presents on Christmas day, but in reality, you all wake up late, moody and hung over. Make the best of what you've got and you won't feel so cheated. If things go horribly wrong — well it only lasts a few days."

Have an attitude of gratitude

"The holidays can be a time of forced bonding and jollity, but rather than dwell on all the bad stuff, think about what you're thankful for. Yes, you might feel like punching Auntie Phyllis by the time she's had her third whisky, but if you remind (yourself) that you only have to spend one day a year with her — you'll have more patience."

Pretend you're still at work

"What makes you more effective at work can help you save time and beat stress at home. Time management skills: Salami slicing is time consuming, so do that first. Think of present buying as you would a big project — you'd never leave it to the very last minute. And if your sister is spoiled and a bully, deal with her assertively."

Don't trash your body

"Put too many demands on your body and what will happen is that you will end up running on adrenalin, which can cause up to 60 per cent of your cognitive powers to be taken away from you. You can lose sleep and concentration — now try planning something. Look after your body and it will look after your mind. Don't expect it to take you to loads and loads of parties."

Best Health

Creating healthy gifts for the holidays

BEST HEALTH MINUTE
Bonnie Munday
Editor-in-chief
Best Health Magazine

In the December issue of Best Health magazine, on newsstands now, our regular dietitian columnist Sue Mah offers a few ideas for how to make a gift that is both thoughtful and healthy.

Here are a few:

Soup mix in a jar
Take a glass Mason jar and layer it with multi-coloured soup ingredients like rice, lentils, dried green split peas, red lentils, black beans and herbs. You'll end up with pretty, colourful layers in the jar. Tie a ribbon around the jar and voila.

Family cookbook
Share your favourite family recipes by copying them and pasting into a pretty, blank notebook. Attach a new apron, wooden spoon or oven mitts as a bonus.

Give coupons
Your time is the most precious gift you can give to friends and loved ones. Create your own coupons and use them as stocking stuffers. Anything goes. Some ideas for what to promise your partner with the coupon: Dinner on me, at the restaurant of your choice; one free hand car wash by me; no putting out the garbage duty for the week.

And for the kids: Extra marshmallows in your hot chocolate, movie with mom and dad.

Make the coupons redeemable at any time of year and seal them with a kiss.

For more holiday gift ideas, see the December issue of Best Health.

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Quote

Your time is the most precious gift you can give to friends and loved ones.

Dig into dynamic yoga

Holistic fitness. We talk you through an explosive yoga sequence that will leave your muscles burning

ROMINA MCGUINNESS
Metro World News

I say, yoga? You say, "Zzzz… No thanks — I'm not into that whole breathing and stretching thing. I'll stick to cardio and weights."

If that's you, then you've probably never tried any form of dynamic yoga.

The main goal of the Surya Namaskar A sequence (literally meaning saluting the sun, it's the opening cycle used in one of one of the most challenging forms of yoga, ashtanga) is to warm up the body by synchronizing the breath with the progressive postures that are designed to generate intense internal heat.

It isn't pretty. You'll sweat profusely by the time you're done with the sequence.

But that's the whole point. The more you sweat, the more you help detoxify your muscles and internal organs. But it's also a hard-core workout that's the perfect way to keep your body bendy and warm this winter.

Quote

"It's like doing push up after push up after push up."

Kristin McGee
Celebrity trainer

It fills your body up with oxygen

This yoga sequence works with ujjayi (victorious) breath, which is both energizing and relaxing.

"This breathing technique will deepen your breath. Inhale and exhale through your nose, slightly constricting the back of your throat in order to create a soft "ah" sound, making sure each breath is long and smooth. This will provide you with a constant supply of oxygen, really powering up your muscles," celebrity yoga trainer, Kristin McGee (who's responsible for the super lean and toned reality TV star Bethenny Frankel and singer LeAnn Rimes Cibrian) tells Metro.

It combines strength training and cardio:

"The whole Surya Namaskar A flow is an incredible circuit-training workout," says McGee. "As you go from standing to down, you're having to use your entire body weight. Stop and think about … the movement of your body. It's similar to the motion of swimming, only on land."

Constantly having to lunge or step forward into and out of each pose engages the core and builds up inner strength. It's not just your arms that are getting a workout, but your legs, abs and bum as well, says McGee.

"When you go into chaturanga, it's like doing push up after push up after push up — or yoga burpees. And as you get to the end of the sequence and go into downward dog followed by a forward bend, you're working on your flexibility, because if you're doing it right, you're really having to stretch your muscles out beyond your usual comfort zone. So if you're a runner or cyclist with tight hamstrings and hip flexors and can only extend your leg so far or kick your heel so high, (it's) just a small increase in the range of motion."

Rev up your metabolic rate

"Moving through the sequence fast requires you to use your entire body. It's not like you're just running or just strength training — but both. You're getting two types of cardio at once and really heating your body up. The reason your metabolism increases is because, as you start to build up lean muscle mass, strength and tone, just by putting your body through the sequence, you bump up the amount of energy you need to get you through the day," says McGee.

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SURYA NAMASKARA

1. Inhale and look up. Lift your arms up over your head, tilt your head back and gaze at your fingertips
2. Exhale swan dive forward
3. Inhale into a flat back forward bend
4. Exhale, step into plank and lower in to chaturanga
5. Inhale, lift yourself in to upward-facing dog
6. Exhale, press yourself back to downward-facing dog and hold five breaths. Inhale, step forward. Exhale and fold. Inhale swan dive up.

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mdpu.ca
Mood Disorders Psychopharmacology Unit
University Health Network

Velvety chocolate flavour shines in rich cheesecake

ROSE REISMAN
for more, visit
rosereisman.com

You'll never eat a cheesecake that's so dense and rich tasting, yet so low in fat and calories.

The combo of semi-sweet chocolate and cocoa powder gives this cheesecake its velvety chocolate flavour. Garnish it with fresh berries.

It comes in at 259 calories and just 10 grams of fat per serving.

This recipe serves 12. MARK SHAPIRO, FROM ROSE REISMAN'S COMPLETE LIGHT KITCHEN (WHITECAP BOOKS)

1. Preheat oven to 350 F. Spray 9-inch springform pan with cooking oil.

2. Crust: Combine wafer crumbs, 2 tbsp water and oil in bowl and mix well. Pat onto bottom and slightly up sides of springform pan.

3. Filling: Combine chocolate chips and 2 tbsp water in microwaveable bowl and microwave for 40 seconds. Stir until smooth.

4. Combine chocolate mix with ricotta and cream cheese, 1 cup sugar, cocoa, egg and 1/2 cup sour cream in bowl of food processor and purée until smooth. Pour over crust. Bake 30 minutes. Centre should still be slightly loose.

5. For topping, mix sour cream and sugar. Carefully spoon over cake. Bake another 10 minutes. Cool on rack, then chill completely before removing the sides of the pan and serving. Top with chocolate wafer crumbs. **ROSE REISMAN'S COMPLETE LIGHT KITCHEN (WHITECAP BOOKS)**

Ingredients

Crust
- 2 cups chocolate wafer crumbs
- 2 tbsp water
- 1 tbsp vegetable oil

Cheesecake
- 1/3 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 2 tbsp water
- 1 1/2 cups light smooth ricotta cheese
- 3/4 cup light cream cheese
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 large egg
- 1/2 cup low-fat sour cream
- 2 tbsp all-purpose flour

Topping
- 1 1/4 cups low-fat sour cream
- 2 tbsp sugar

Health Solutions

Your holiday cheat sheet

NUTRI-BITES
Theresa Albert, DHN, RNCP
myfriendinfood.com

Oh, come on, it's the holidays! We both know you are going to eat more than you should, so let's just embrace it. I encourage my private clients to switch to a "nutrient per calorie" model when they are going to cheat.

That means that if you can't keep calories low, focus on those items that are loaded with nutrients and use them to enhance your "cheats." Here are three ideas:

1. Cranberry sauce

Assuming it is homemade and not from a can (which likely means more sugar), this condiment is a great way to stretch that brownie/Nanaimo bar/cake you have on your plate. A couple of tablespoons on the side will give you a filling, tart kick of phytonutrients and fibre. The hope is that you can now resist that second slice...

2. Spice it up

Your brain registers intense flavours more actively than bland ones. This means that adding spiciness or low calorie intensity may help you feel satisfied with less food. Think hot sauce, spicy mustard or even horseradish — all will perk up your palate!

3. Fresh herbs

Oh, I know they are often only on the platter for garnish but who says you can't hog garnish? Fresh herbs are full of chlorophyll and tummy soothing nutrients that may replace the extra space on your plate that you are tempted to fill with mashed potatoes.

THERESA ALBERT IS AN AUTHOR AND ON CALL, PRIVATE NUTRITIONIST IN TORONTO. SHE IS @THERESAALBERT ON TWITTER AND FOUND DAILY AT MYFRIENDINFOOD.COM

Games to raise your money IQ

Alison on Money.
Website's game, called Cranial Cash Clash, helps teach you money skills

YOUR MONEY
Alison Griffiths
money@metronews.ca

It's not too late to raise your holiday money IQ! If you're feeling a little overwhelmed as the big day draws near, there's nothing like a game to improve your outlook.

The Investor Education Fund (getsmarteraboutmoney.ca) has created Cranial Cash Clash, a series of interactive games to teach money skills. The latest, Gift Thrift, offers tips about holiday spending, the use of credit cards and related topics such as credit ratings. You may find that a couple of the questions have fairly obvious answers, but they do get you thinking.

On the other hand, there are many you likely don't know.

Try this one: If you decide to give a gift to your favourite charity or charities, does the amount you give affect the tax credit you receive?

Which is right?

A. No. As long as they are accredited charities, the benefit to you is the same.

B. Yes, but there may be restrictions for out-of-province charities.

C. Yes, the tax credit goes up if you give more than $200.

D. No, it's a 15 per cent credit no matter how much you give.

The answer is C.

Gift Thrift can be played via Facebook with friends or family members. The Leaderboard lets you log in and keep track of scores as you go. There are eight other Cranial Cash Clash games dealing with everything from investing to financial scams and debt. The questions are randomized so you can't practice the answers for a certain win.

Bonus points are awarded when you answer within a certain time. If you flub, as I did on a question about credit scores (my finger slipped, really!), you can input your email address at the end of the game to receive information about that subject area. You'll also see a link to a more detailed explanation.

Though not designed for youth, the series is also a great way to get teens and young adults thinking and talking about money issues. They won't be familiar with many of the topics, but the questions will stimulate discussion.

Cranial Cash Clash is a nice break from holiday shopping.

Contact Alison at griffiths.alison@gmail.com or alisongriffiths.ca

Pop quiz

What is the interest free grace period on credit cards?

- **A.** There isn't one
- **B.** 30 days
- **C.** 14 days
- **D.** 21 days

• Answer (D)

Christmas presents

Gift buying for awkward people

FUN AND FRUGAL
Lesley Scorgie
money@metronews.ca

So your dad has a new girlfriend and you're still warming up to her. Sure, she seems nice enough, but without knowing much about her personal tastes, what should you buy her for the holidays when your budget is already tight?

We've all been faced with the "what to buy for the awkward person in your life" dilemma. You don't want to waste your money or offend your boss, co-worker, a not-too-close friend, or someone your friend or family member is dating. You may even want to impress the person with something useful or miraculously thoughtful.

Before you hit up the mall for the latest infomercial gadget, understand the relationship of the person to you and what they mean to you today and in the future. If you and your brother-in-law are off to a rocky start, you may want to extend a thoughtful olive branch that could help mend a bridge or two. If it's your boss, watch what you spend so that you don't come off looking like a suck-up, especially if your coworkers find out.

It can be tough to find an appropriate gift for every person in your life. ISTOCK IMAGES

Determine the appropriate price point for the person. Have an open discussion with friends and family members in advance and set limits. This might be an opportune time to introduce the idea of a frugal Secret Santa gift exchange where you're only responsible for buying one gift for one person.

Be resourceful. Investigate what the person would want or need. Listen carefully when in conversation to see if they give away any hints. Ask someone who knows them well what they'd enjoy. Are they a coffee connoisseur or movie buff? If so, perhaps a travel mug, which reduces waste and saves a few pennies at the till, or a gift card to the movies, would be appropriate.

Cash in your loyalty rewards toward the gift so you don't have to dig deeper into your wallet. Better yet, forget buying a gift and make a donation on behalf of your coworkers to a well-known charity.

Overall, stop while you're ahead. You don't need to buy gifts for everyone in your life. This results in overspending or spreading out your budget so thin that you'll end up buying junk for people rather than something useful or thoughtful. If you've got loads of people you'd like to please with presents, try baking or making something small and thoughtful.

A frugal gift of appreciation for that awkward person might go a long way toward making the relationship more pleasant.

But if you really don't like the person, forget a gift and simply save your money.

Follow Lesley on Twitter @LesleyScorgie

Talk with kids about shooting, make them feel safe: Experts

Family. Following the Connecticut shooting, it's best to limit kids' exposure to media

The killings at a Connecticut elementary school left parents struggling to figure out what, if anything, to tell their children.

President Barack Obama said he and his wife, Michelle, would tell their daughters that they love them and hug them a little tighter. Experts say that's a good example to follow. Parents also should allow children to talk about their feelings in the coming days while sheltering them from the 24/7 media coverage of the event, they say.

A man gunned down more than two dozen people Friday, most of them kids at a Newtown, Conn., elementary school. The shooter was among the 28 people left dead, apparently from a self-inflicted wound.

Whitney Finucane wasn't sure how and when she would talk with her son, Nico, about the shooting. She kissed and hugged him when he came out from kindergarten at Dr. Martin Luther King Elementary in Providence, R.I., on Friday.

"I don't know how to explain insanity and evil to a five-year-old," she said. "I don't know that he can really grasp it."

Even the youngest schoolchildren are likely to hear about it, said Glenn Saxe, chairman of the department of child and adolescent psychiatry at NYU Langone Medical Center.

"It's really important, especially at this time, for parents to check in with their kids, to be attuned to how they're feeling, how they're doing and to answer questions honestly and straightforwardly," he said. "For any other kid in school, this has meaning. Parents need to understand that even in surprising ways, this can affect their kids."

Parents can start by asking their children what they've already heard and what questions they have, said Dr. David Schonfeld, a pediatrician and director of the National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center. If they ask why someone would do something like this, it's OK to say you don't know.

"I wouldn't provide false reassurance or dismiss legitimate concerns," he said. "We don't help children by telling them they shouldn't be afraid of things that are frightening."

Parents can tell their kids, "What is most important is that you're safe and you're going to be safe," said Dr. Louis Kraus, chief of child and adolescent psychiatry at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago.

Above all, parents need to try to help their children feel safe, he said. Helping kids return to or maintain normal routines can help minimize their anxiety, Kraus said.

Some children may ask the same questions over and over as a way to seek reassurance, and parents shouldn't dismiss them, said Dr. David Fassler, a child and adolescent psychiatrist in Burlington, Vt.

"Acknowledge and validate the child's thoughts, feelings, and reactions. Let them know that you think their questions and concerns are important and appropriate," he said.

Parents of young children should keep their children from hearing reports on TV, radio and social media and to closely monitor exposure to media for all children, several experts said. Children who show persistent signs of anxiety and stress, including recurring nightmares or sleep problems and fears about leaving home, should see their pediatrician or a mental health expert, Kraus said.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Safety at school

As students head back to their classrooms on Monday, parents and children should know that school shootings are rare and schools still are among the safest places, said William Lassiter of the Center for the Prevention of School Violence. Parents can ask their principal or parent-teacher group for a copy of their school crisis plan.

Notice whether schools stick to their own security plans, he said. Do people have to check in at the door and sign in at the front office, for example?

"A lot of times, the parents are the ones who need to remind the school," he said.

It's important to know what to tell your children after a tragedy. ISTOCK IMAGES

Tolkien literature to the next level

The vast collection of J.R.R. Tolkien manuscripts initially sold senior Joe Kirchoff on Marquette University, so when the school offered its first course devoted exclusively to the English author, Kirchoff wanted in. The only problem: It was full and he wasn't on the literature track.

Undaunted, the 22-year-old political science and history major lobbied the English department and others starting last spring and through the summer and "kind of just made myself a problem," he said. His persistence paid off.

"It's a fantastic course," said Kirchoff, a Chicago native. "It's a great way to look at something that's such a creative work of genius in such a way you really come to understand the man behind it."

He and the 31 other students can now boast of their authority about the author, who influenced much of today's high fantasy writing. The course was taught for the first time this fall as part of the university's celebration of the 75th anniversary of The Hobbit being published. And class wrapped up just before the film, The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey, was released Friday.

The class, which filled up fast with mostly seniors who had first dibs, looked at Tolkien as a whole, not just the popular Lord of the Rings and The Hobbit. Students took their final exam this week, and the course was so well received, Marquette is considering more in the future.

"It's the best class I've had in 27 years here ... for student preparation, interest and enthusiasm," said English professor Tim Machan. "And I can throw out any topic and they will have read the material and they want to talk about the material."

Though Tolkien classes aren't unusual nationwide, Marquette students had the added bonus of being able to visit Tolkien's revisions, notes, detailed calendars, maps and watercolours on site at the school's archive. And they got a lesson from the school's archivist Bill Fliss.

"One of the things we wanted to impress upon the students was the fact that Tolkien was a fanatical reviser," Fliss said. "He never really did anything once and was finished with it."

Marquette University professor Tim Machan teaches a class on J.R.R. Tolkien that focuses on all of his books, books that influenced Tolkien and other tidbits about the writer. CARRIE ANTLFINGER / THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Chrissy Wabiszewski, a senior English major, described Tolkien's manuscripts as art.

"When you get down and look at just his script and his artwork in general, it all kind of flows together in this really beautiful, like, cumulative form," Wabiszewski said. "It's cool. It is just really cool to have it here."

The class also looked at Tolkien's poetry, academic articles and translations of medieval poems; talked about the importance of his writers' group, the Inklings; and explored what it meant to be a writer at that time.

"We've ... tried to think about continuities that ran through everything he did," Machan said. His students were also required to go to three lectures that were part of Marquette's commemoration.

The Hobbit, a tale of homebody Bilbo Baggins' journey, is set in Tolkien's fictional realm of Middle-earth and takes place 60 years before The Lord of the Rings. The movie released Friday is the first of the trilogy. The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug is expected to be released on Dec. 13, 2013, and a third film will come out in the summer of 2014.

Most of the students were just finishing elementary school when the first Lord of the Rings film was released 11 years ago.

Kirchoff said he started reading The Hobbit and the Lord of the Rings when he was in fourth grade, before the movies came out. He said the movies have introduced others to Tolkien's ideas, making his love for Tolkien's fantasy worlds more socially acceptable.

"The movies were fantastic enough and engaging enough to coexist in my mind with the literature I really do love," he said.

Wabiszewski said it's clear her classmates weren't just taking the class as a filler.

"I definitely expected the enthusiasm from everybody, but just the knowledge that everybody brought into the class, it's cool," she said. "We really have a smart group of people in that class who have a lot to offer."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

No naps in these lecture halls

"It's the best class I've had in 27 years here ... for student preparation, interest and enthusiasm. And I can throw out any topic and they will have read the material and they want to talk about the material."

Tim Machan
English professor

R.A. Dickey, the National League's Cy Young award winner in 2012, passed a physical on Monday and signed a two-year extension with the Blue Jays with a club option for the 2016 season. DENIS POROY/GETTY IMAGES FILE

Dickey could become legendary in Toronto

ETHAN ROTBERG
ethan.rotberg@metronews.ca

After inking a contract extension and passing his physical, R.A. Dickey joined the Blue Jays through a seven-player trade with the New York Mets.

There are a lot of reasons to be skeptical of Dickey. It's the easy perspective to take, so here it is.

He is 38 years old. He has no ulnar collateral ligament in his pitching arm. He throws the most fickle and unpredictable type of pitch: the knuckleball. And before he joined the Mets in 2010, he pitched to truly awful results. In his only major-league appearance in 2006, he surrendered six home runs to the Tigers without escaping the fourth inning.

But now Toronto might be called the favourite to win the World Series. That's because there are also reasons to trust Dickey. So here's the other perspective.

Beyond baseball

Dickey, an English literature major, released an autobiography in 2012 titled Wherever I Wind Up: My Quest for Truth, Authenticity and the Perfect Knuckleball.

- In it, Dickey details the sexual abuse he endured as a child, how his dreams of being a pitcher were nearly destroyed and how he was sustained by his Christian faith while confronting his demons.
- He's also set to publish a children's adaptation of Wherever I Wind Up in fall 2013.

His age does not reflect where he is in his career. Historically, knuckleball pitchers stay effective much longer than their velocity-obsessed cohorts. Fellow knuckleballer Tim Wakefield had one of his finest seasons at age 41. More importantly, Dickey has actually improved as he's entered his late-30s — culminating in 2012's Cy Young award.

Simply put, R.A. Dickey seems to be at his peak. Even if he regresses, he could still be an elite pitcher. An ace, bewildering hitters from the Rogers Centre mound for the next three years.

Dickey didn't always throw the knuckleball, so it's nearly useless to analyze his career prior to his mastery of the pitch back in 2010. Since then, he has continued to make significant adjustments. In 2012 he relied more on a hard knuckleball. A pitch zigzagging towards the plate at upwards of 80 m.p.h. Throwing that fast is rare for a knuckleballer. It allowed him greater control — minimizing walks and leading the National League in strikeouts.

Born without the UCL — a ligament on the inner side of the elbow — Dickey shouldn't be able to turn a doorknob without feeling pain. But he can. And he can also throw the filthiest pitch in baseball. Save your Stephen Strasburg changeup, Justin Verlander fastball and Roy Halladay curveball. Dickey's knuckleball makes hitters look silly.

As a baseball player, Dickey is something new. He's something special. He writes books. He climbed Mount Kilimanjaro to help raise awareness of human trafficking in India. He gives away scores of tickets to underprivileged children.

Imagine a player with the dominance of a Halladay and the folk-hero following of John McDonald.

Follow Ethan Rotberg on Twitter @EthanDR

R.A. Dickey GETTY IMAGES FILE

MLB. Blue Jays get new ace locked up

The Toronto Blue Jays officially acquired Cy Young winner R.A. Dickey, adding the 38-year-old knuckleballer on Monday evening.

The New York Mets traded Dickey to Toronto for a package featuring prized young catcher Travis d'Arnaud.

The Blue Jays then signed the pitcher to a two-year contract extension for $29 million US, with a $12-million option for the 2016 season.

Quoted

"Looking forward to a new chapter with the Jays."

R.A. Dickey on Twitter after officially being acquired by the Blue Jays on Monday.

Dickey was already signed for $5.25 million next year.

Toronto also acquired catcher Josh Thole and minor-league catcher Mike Nickeas, while the Mets received catcher John Buck, minor-league right-hander Noah Syndergaard and minor-league outfielder Wuilmer Becerra.

Dickey was 20-6 with a 2.73 ERA last season, capping his rapid rise from the majors' scrap heap to an ace pitcher.

"We clearly are convinced this can be a front-line starter for us," said Blue Jays general manager Alex Anthopoulos on a conference call Monday night. THE CANADIAN PRESS

CFL

Austin given keys to Tiger-Cats

The Hamilton Tiger-Cats announced the hiring of Kent Austin to be the club's head coach, general manager and vice-president of football operations on Monday.

Austin won a Grey Cup as the Saskatchewan Roughriders' head coach in 2007.

He takes over as coach from George Cortez, who was fired last week after compiling a 6-12 record in Hamilton. Last season's GM, Bob O'Billovich, has been offered another position with the club.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Kent Austin was named the Tiger-Cats' head coach in Hamilton on Monday. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Soccer

Fans of Russia's Zenit call for all-white, non-gay team

Fans of two-time defending Russian champion Zenit St. Petersburg are calling for non-white and gay players to be excluded from the team.

Supporters' club Landscrona released a manifesto Monday demanding Zenit to field an all-white, heterosexual team. It added "dark-skinned players are all but forced down Zenit's throat" and said gay players were "unworthy of our great city."

Coach Luciano Spalletti said on Zenit's website that "tolerance for me is most of all the ability to understand and accept differences."

"Furthermore, being tolerant means that you fight against any kind of stupidity," he added.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NFL

"It's something that I'm not focusing on, it's in the back of my mind, but I want to accomplish that."

Minnesota Vikings running back Adrian Peterson, who is 294 yards away from eclipsing Eric Dickerson's record of 2,105 yards rushing set in 1984 with two games remaining in the season.

Lightning's Stamkos keeping busy while away from NHL ice

Lockout. Top sniper trying to 'pick up positives' while awaiting end to labour unrest

The longest hiatus Steven Stamkos has ever taken from high-level hockey is not without its occasional good moments.

There are always plenty of laughs when the NHL star takes the ice for a weekly pickup game with his father Chris and some buddies, a handful of whom are almost three times his age. There is the extra time spent in the gym alongside close friend and mentor Gary Roberts.

And then there is the anticipation of next week's Christmas celebration, the first one he'll get to enjoy at home with family in Markham in six or seven years.

"As tough as it is, as frustrating as it is, you try to pick up some positives," said Stamkos.

But it's clear the NHL's most dangerous scorer is feeling the pain of the lockout. Standing under the sloped roof at the building formerly known as Maple Leaf Gardens on Monday, the locked-out Tampa Bay Lightning forward couldn't help but slip in a few references to his growing displeasure.

"It's frustrating," said Stamkos. "You do something for your whole life and you don't really think anything of it. Everything you do is geared towards playing hockey."

The 22-year-old quickly steered the conversation back to a charity game in Toronto on Wednesday night, where he'll captain a team against one led by Montreal Canadiens defenceman P.K. Subban.

He'll get to skate alongside James Neal, Dion Phaneuf, Phil Kessel and Logan Couture, among others, with all of the proceeds from the sold-out Mattamy Athletic Centre benefiting the NHLPA's Goals & Dreams Fund and the RBC Play Hockey program.

"When there's no hockey, you try to find other things to do and a great cause to be part of," said Stamkos. "This is one of them." THE CANADIAN PRESS

Tampa Bay Lightning sniper Steven Stamkos is staying active during the NHL lockout by playing pickup hockey, working out and getting involved in charity games. BRUCE BENNETT/GETTY IMAGES FILE

State of the lockout

- **Games cancelled.** Players have missed six pay cheques with 526 games cancelled through Dec. 30.
- **State of talks.** The sides aren't meeting. The NHL and NHLPA met with federal mediators in New York Dec. 12-13, but then talks ended.
- **Happening now.** All 750 players are deciding whether to give their 30-member executive board the mandate to file what is known as a "disclaimer of interest." A two-thirds majority is needed to take the next step: dissolving their union. The five-day informal electronic vote is being conducted until Thursday.
- **Will it pass?** Think "solidarity" here. There's no way players won't get behind this move. Not giving their board this power basically ends the game with Gary Bettman smiling like the Cheshire Cat from Alice in Wonderland.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	18	5	.783	—
Miami	15	6	.714	2
Atlanta	14	7	.667	3
Chicago	13	9	.591	4½
Brooklyn	13	10	.565	5
Milwaukee	12	10	.545	5½
Indiana	13	11	.542	5½
Boston	12	11	.522	6
Philadelphia	12	12	.500	6½
Orlando	11	13	.458	7½
Charlotte	7	16	.304	11
Detroit	7	19	.269	12½
Toronto	**6**	**19**	**.240**	**13**
Cleveland	5	20	.200	14
Washington	3	18	.143	14

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
Oklahoma City	19	4	.826	—
San Antonio	19	6	.760	1
L.A. Clippers	17	6	.739	2
Memphis	15	6	.714	3
Golden State	16	8	.667	3½
Minnesota	12	10	.545	6½
Utah	13	12	.520	7
Denver	13	12	.520	7
Portland	11	12	.478	8
Houston	11	12	.478	8
Dallas	11	13	.458	8½
L.A. Lakers	11	14	.440	9
Phoenix	9	15	.375	10½
Sacramento	7	16	.304	12
New Orleans	5	18	.217	14

Division leaders ranked in top three positions and best eight teams qualify for playoffs

Monday's results
Orlando 103 Minnesota 92
Houston at New York
L.A. Clippers at Detroit
Chicago at Memphis
San Antonio at Oklahoma City
Sacramento at Phoenix

Sunday's results
Toronto 103 Houston 96
L.A. Lakers 111 Philadelphia 98
Denver 122 Sacramento 97
Portland 95 New Orleans 94

Tuesday's games — All Times Eastern
Toronto at Cleveland, 7 p.m.
Atlanta at Washington, 7 p.m.
Utah at Brooklyn, 7:30 p.m.
Minnesota at Miami, 7:30 p.m.
Boston at Chicago, 8 p.m.
Indiana at Milwaukee, 8 p.m.
Philadelphia at Dallas, 8:30 p.m.
San Antonio at Denver, 9 p.m.
Charlotte at L.A. Lakers, 10:30 p.m.
New Orleans at Golden State, 10:30 p.m.

Wednesday's games
Utah at Indiana, 7 p.m.
Detroit at **Toronto**, 7 p.m.
Brooklyn at New York, 7 p.m.
Washington at Orlando, 7 p.m.
Oklahoma City at Atlanta, 7:30 p.m.
Cleveland at Boston, 7:30 p.m.
Philadelphia at Houston, 8 p.m.
Charlotte at Phoenix, 9 p.m.
Milwaukee at Memphis, 9:30 p.m.
Golden State at Sacramento, 10 p.m.
New Orleans at L.A. Clippers, 10:30 p.m.

Thursday's games
Oklahoma City at Minnesota, 7 p.m.
Miami at Dallas, 9:30 p.m.
Denver at Portland, 10 p.m.

NBA SCORING LEADERS

	G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
Bryant, LAL	25	246	192	738	29.5
Anthony, NYK	20	190	126	557	27.9
Durant, Okl	23	202	192	632	27.5
James, Mia	21	210	85	533	25.4
Harden, Hou	22	163	181	549	25.0
Aldridge, Por	22	184	93	461	21.0
Westbrook, Okl	23	170	103	478	20.8
Mayo, Dal	24	172	80	490	20.4
Curry, GoS	24	162	85	473	19.7
Pierce, Bos	23	145	125	454	19.7
Wade, Mia	18	134	78	350	19.4
Lee, GoS	24	192	77	461	19.2
Parker, SA	23	176	81	442	19.2
Gay, Mem	21	152	70	398	19.0
Ellis, Mil	22	153	97	419	19.0
Lillard, Por	23	149	81	432	18.8
Anderson, NO	23	162	23	427	18.6
Holiday, Phi	22	162	58	404	18.4
Griffin, LAC	23	173	71	418	18.2
Howard, LAL	25	162	129	454	18.2
Walker, Cha	23	151	90	416	18.1
Bosh, Mia	21	139	99	381	18.1
DeRozan, Tor	**25**	**172**	**93**	**450**	**18.0**
Deng, Chi	22	149	75	392	17.8
Randolph, Mem	21	149	71	369	17.6
West, Ind	24	175	72	422	17.6
Jefferson, Uta	24	179	58	418	17.4
Duncan, SA	24	164	85	415	17.3
Williams, Bro	23	130	91	391	17.0
Cousins, Sac	20	130	78	339	17.0
Jennings, Mil	22	139	52	371	16.9
Johnson, Bro	23	149	46	387	16.8
Crawford, LAC	23	125	89	382	16.6
Smith, Atl	20	138	42	331	16.6
George, Ind	24	145	50	394	16.4
Horford, Atl	20	145	36	326	16.3
Felton, NYK	23	150	34	375	16.3
Afflalo, Orl	23	143	56	372	16.2
Martin, Okl	23	109	98	367	16.0
Paul, LAC	23	127	92	369	16.0
Batum, Por	22	117	60	347	15.8
Davis, Orl	23	147	66	360	15.7
Garnett, Bos	23	149	64	362	15.7
Thompson, GoS	24	141	34	377	15.7
Gallinari, Den	24	124	90	375	15.6
Matthews, Por	21	112	56	325	15.5
Parsons, Hou	22	125	45	342	15.5
Gasol, Mem	21	116	92	324	15.4
Turner, Phi	24	144	63	370	15.4
Pekovic, Min	19	113	65	291	15.3

Not including last night's games

RAPTORS STATISTICS

	G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
DeRozan	25	172	93	450	18.0
Bargnani	21	127	53	337	16.0
Lowry	16	78	72	253	15.8
Calderon	25	87	37	253	10.1
Anderson	8	20	19	70	8.8
Pietrus	8	23	9	66	8.3
Valanciunas	25	79	41	199	8.0
Kleiza	15	41	20	119	7.9
Davis	25	72	37	181	7.2
Johnson	24	66	35	169	7.0
Ross	23	58	6	140	6.1
Lucas	20	29	5	75	3.8
Fields	5	5	2	12	2.4
Acy	4	2	5	9	2.3
Gray	11	9	5	23	2.1

AHL

EASTERN CONFERENCE

ATLANTIC DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OTL	SOL	GF	GA	Pt
Portland	27	15	10	1	1	82	83	32
Providence	25	14	9	0	2	61	69	30
Worcester	26	13	10	1	2	72	78	29
Manchester	27	12	11	2	2	75	70	28
St. John's	28	13	14	0	1	66	77	27

NORTHEAST DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OTL	SOL	GF	GA	Pt
Springfield	25	15	5	2	3	87	58	35
Bridgeport	26	12	11	1	2	79	87	27
Albany	23	9	8	0	6	55	61	24
Connecticut	26	11	13	2	0	74	88	24
Adirondack	25	10	14	1	0	61	75	21

EAST DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OTL	SOL	GF	GA	Pt
Syracuse	26	17	6	1	2	95	70	37
Binghamton	22	14	6	1	1	70	53	30
W-B/Scranton	25	13	10	1	1	69	68	28
Hershey	27	13	12	1	1	73	75	28
Norfolk	24	11	12	1	0	69	74	23

WESTERN CONFERENCE

NORTH DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OTL	SOL	GF	GA	Pt
Abbotsford	26	15	5	3	3	66	62	36
Toronto	25	15	9	0	1	85	68	31
Rochester	24	12	9	2	1	82	76	27
Lake Erie	27	12	13	1	1	82	88	26
Hamilton	24	10	12	1	1	55	76	22

MIDWEST DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OTL	SOL	GF	GA	Pt
Grand Rapids	24	13	9	1	1	74	70	28
Rockford	27	13	12	1	1	88	86	28
Chicago	24	12	9	2	1	65	71	27
Milwaukee	26	12	11	2	1	73	79	27
Peoria	26	11	11	2	2	63	83	26

SOUTH

	GP	W	L	OTL	SOL	GF	GA	Pt
Charlotte	28	17	9	0	2	90	74	36
Houston	26	14	8	1	3	82	73	32
Texas	25	13	8	2	2	62	65	30
Oklahoma City	26	13	9	1	3	86	78	30
San Antonio	28	10	15	0	3	71	87	23

Note: Two points awarded for a win, one for an overtime or shootout loss.

Sunday's results
Springfield 3 Manchester 2 (SO)
Portland 3 Worcester 2
Grand Rapids 0 Toronto 5
St. John's 4 Providence 0
Charlotte 2 San Antonio 1
Hamilton 3 Milwaukee 4
Oklahoma City 3 Houston 4 (SO)

Tuesday's games — All Times Eastern
Hamilton at Peoria, 8:05 p.m.

Wednesday's games
Abbotsford at Chicago, 12 p.m.
St. John's at Adirondack, 7 p.m.
Springfield at Portland, 7 p.m.
Norfolk at Hershey, 7 p.m.
Albany at Bridgeport, 7 p.m.
Toronto at Lake Erie, 7 p.m.
Rochester at Grand Rapids, 7 p.m.
W-B/Scranton at Binghamton, 7:05 p.m.
Rockford at Milwaukee, 8 p.m.
San Antonio at Texas, 8:30 p.m.

Thursday's games
Houston at Lake Erie, 7 p.m.
Peoria at Charlotte, 7 p.m.

Friday's games
Connecticut at Manchester, 7 p.m.
San Antonio at Toronto, 7 p.m.
Peoria at Charlotte, 7 p.m.
Abbotsford at Grand Rapids, 7 p.m.
Binghamton at Rochester, 7:05 p.m.
Worcester at Providence, 7:05 p.m.
St. John's at Hamilton, 7:30 p.m.
Albany at Norfolk, 7:30 p.m.
Adirondack at Syracuse, 7:30 p.m.
Rockford at Milwaukee, 8 p.m.
Texas at Oklahoma City, 8 p.m.

TRANSACTIONS

BASEBALL

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE —Suspended Tampa Bay minor league OF Cody Rogers 50 games for refusing to take an offseason drug test.

AMERICAN LEAGUE
DETROIT TIGERS —Agreed to terms with RHP Anibal Sanchez on a five-year contract.
HOUSTON ASTROS —Agreed to terms with DH Carlos Pena on a one-year contract.
TORONTO BLUE JAYS —Traded C John Buck, C Travis d'Arnaud, RHP Noah Syndergaard and OF Wuilmer Beccera to the N.Y. Mets for RHP R.A. Dickey, C Josh Thole and C Mike Nickeas. Agreed to terms with Dickey on a three-year contract.

NATIONAL LEAGUE
CHICAGO CUBS —Agreed to terms with 3B Ian Stewart on a one-year contract. Designated LHP Jeff Beliveau for assignment. Agreed to terms with RHP Chang-Yong Lim on a minor league contract.
MILWAUKEE BREWERS —Agreed to terms with INF Donnie Murphy on a minor league contract.

NBA

NBA —Promoted Mike Bass to executive vice president, communications.
MEMPHIS GRIZZLIES —Assigned G Josh Selby to Reno (NBADL). Recalled G Tony Wroten from Reno.

NFL

NFL —Suspended Washington T Jordan Black four games for violating the league's policy on performance enhancing substances.
ARIZONA CARDINALS —Re-signed OL Mike Gibson. Released DT Ricky Lumpkin.
CHICAGO BEARS —Placed DT Matt Toeaina on injured reserve. Signed T Cory Brandon from the practice squad.
CLEVELAND BROWNS —Released DB Dimitri Patterson.

CFL

HAMILTON TIGER-CATS —Named Kent Austin coach.

NHL

DALLAS STARS —Reassigned D Hubert Labrie from Idaho (ECHL) to Texas (AHL).
DETROIT RED WINGS —Reassigned D Gleason Fournier and F Andrej Nestrasil from Toledo (ECHL) to Grand Rapids (AHL).
American Hockey League
GRAND RAPIDS GRIFFINS —Recalled F Luke Glendening from Toledo (ECHL).
SPRINGFIELD FALCONS —Released D Chris Reed from a professional tryout agreement and returned him to Cincinnati (ECHL).

MLS

NEW YORK RED BULLS —Signed M Juninho.

COLLEGE

CINCINNATI —Announced QB Brendon Kay has been granted an extra year of eligibility by the NCAA.
SAN JOSE STATE —Named Ron Caragher football coach.
TEMPLE —Named Matt Rhule football coach.
UC DAVIS —Named Ron Gould football coach.
WEST VIRGINIA —Announced WR Stedman Bailey will enter the NFL draft.

NFL

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

EAST

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-New England	10	4	0	.714	506	315
N.Y. Jets	6	7	0	.462	245	306
Miami	6	8	0	.429	264	279
Buffalo	5	9	0	.357	306	402

SOUTH

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-Houston	12	2	0	.857	394	280
Indianapolis	9	5	0	.643	309	358
Tennessee	4	9	0	.308	271	386
Jacksonville	2	12	0	.143	219	383

NORTH

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-Baltimore	9	5	0	.643	348	307
Cincinnati	8	6	0	.571	355	293
Pittsburgh	7	7	0	.500	302	291
Cleveland	5	9	0	.357	280	310

WEST

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-Denver	11	3	0	.786	409	274
San Diego	5	9	0	.357	299	312
Oakland	4	10	0	.286	263	402
Kansas City	2	12	0	.143	195	367

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

EAST

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Washington	8	6	0	.571	381	350
Dallas	8	6	0	.571	327	338
N.Y. Giants	8	6	0	.571	373	304
Philadelphia	4	10	0	.286	253	375

SOUTH

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-Atlanta	12	2	0	.857	371	259
New Orleans	6	8	0	.429	389	379
Tampa Bay	6	8	0	.429	354	349
Carolina	5	9	0	.357	296	319

NORTH

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-Green Bay	10	4	0	.714	344	292
Minnesota	8	6	0	.571	319	308
Chicago	8	6	0	.571	321	240
Detroit	4	10	0	.286	330	380

WEST

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-San Francisco	10	3	1	.750	357	218
Seattle	9	5	0	.643	350	219
St. Louis	6	7	1	.464	258	315
Arizona	5	9	0	.357	224	302

x — clinched playoff berth; **y** — clinched division.

WEEK 15

Monday's result
N.Y. Jets at Tennessee

Sunday's results
Washington 38 Cleveland 21
Miami 24 Jacksonville 3
Denver 34 Baltimore 17
Atlanta 34 N.Y. Giants 0
Minnesota 36 St. Louis 22
Houston 29 Indianapolis 17
Green Bay 21 Chicago 13
New Orleans 41 Tampa Bay 0
Seattle 50 Buffalo 17
Carolina 31 San Diego 7
Arizona 38 Detroit 10
Dallas 27 Pittsburgh 24
Oakland 15 Kansas City 0
San Francisco 41 New England 34

49ERS 41, PATRIOTS 34

LATE SUNDAY

San Francisco	7	10	14	10	—41
New England	0	3	7	24	—34

First Quarter
SF—Moss 24 pass from Kaepernick (Akers kick), 10:55.

Second Quarter
NE—FG Gostkowski 32, 8:31.
SF—Walker 34 pass from Kaepernick (Akers kick), 6:59.
SF—FG Akers 20, :00.

Third Quarter
SF—Gore 9 offensive fumble return (Akers kick), 10:38.
SF—Crabtree 27 pass from Kaepernick (Akers kick), 10:21.
NE—Woodhead 6 run (Gostkowski kick), 5:59.

Fourth Quarter
NE—Brady 1 run (Gostkowski kick), 14:58.
NE—Hernandez 5 pass from Brady (Gostkowski kick), 12:13.
NE—Woodhead 1 run (Gostkowski kick), 6:43.
SF—Crabtree 38 pass from Kaepernick (Akers kick), 6:25.
SF—FG Akers 28, 1:56.
NE—FG Gostkowski 41, :38.

Attendance—68,756 at Foxborough.

TEAM STATISTICS	SF	NE
First downs	19	32
Total Net Yards	383	520
Rushes-yards	39-180	24-95
Passing	203	425
Punt Returns	3-15	5-13
Kickoff Returns	6-154	5-107
Interceptions Ret.	2-59	1-0
Comp-Att-Int	14-25-1	36-65-2
Sacked-Yards Lost	1-13	3-18
Punts	5-56.6	5-45.6
Fumbles-Lost	6-1	2-2
Penalties-Yards	6-88	8-73
Time of Possession	30:13	29:47

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS
RUSHING—San Francisco, Gore 21-83, James 8-31, Goldson 1-31, Kaepernick 7-28, Dixon 2-7. New England, Woodhead 12-61, Ridley 9-23, Brady 3-11.
PASSING—San Francisco, Kaepernick 14-25-1-216. New England, Brady 36-65-2-443.
RECEIVING—San Francisco, Crabtree 7-107, Moss 2-36, Gore 2-34, Walker 2-29, V.Davis 1-10. New England, Lloyd 10-190, Hernandez 10-92, Welker 5-56, Woodhead 5-23, Branch 4-37, Hoomanawanui 1-41, Vereen 1-4.
MISSED FIELD GOALS—San Francisco, Akers 39 (WL).

WEEK 16

Saturday's game — All Times Eastern
Atlanta at Detroit, 8:30 p.m.

Sunday's games
Minnesota at Houston, 1 p.m.
Tennessee at Green Bay, 1 p.m.
Oakland at Carolina, 1 p.m.
San Diego at N.Y. Jets, 1 p.m.
New England at Jacksonville, 1 p.m.
Indianapolis at Kansas City, 1 p.m.
New Orleans at Dallas, 1 p.m.
St. Louis at Tampa Bay, 1 p.m.
Buffalo at Miami, 1 p.m.
Cincinnati at Pittsburgh, 1 p.m.
Washington at Philadelphia, 1 p.m.
Cleveland at Denver, 4:05 p.m.
N.Y. Giants at Baltimore, 4:25 p.m.
Chicago at Arizona, 4:25 p.m.
San Francisco at Seattle, 8:20 p.m.

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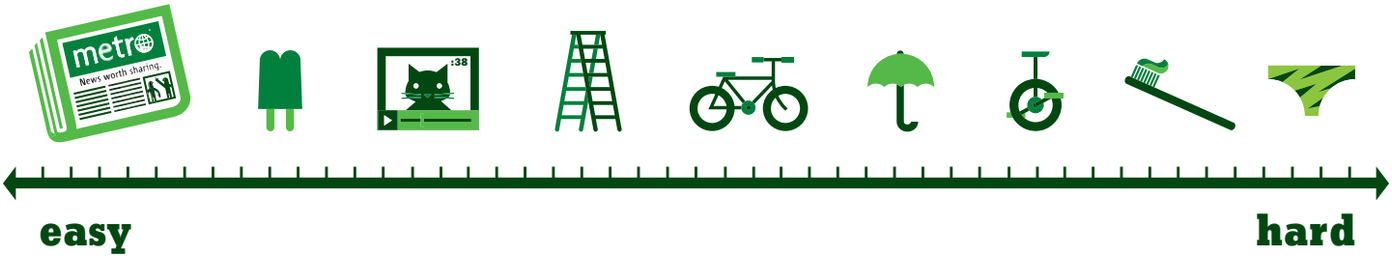


Horoscopes

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
It may be hard to tell fact from fiction today, so don't jump to conclusions. What others say and what others mean are likely to be two different things, so it's essential that you read between the lines.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
Attitude is everything, especially on the work front where you need to convince yourself that all things are possible. Your thoughts, more than ever today, will create your reality. Think success and you will be a success.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
You would be wise not to make any major decisions or announcements today. You may be bursting to tell the world about what you have done but you will get a much better response if you leave it a while.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
You are in danger of making something that is not that important appear bigger than it actually is. Your task today is to focus your mind on something that makes you feel good, something that lifts your spirits to new heights.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
Don't be too eager to make changes today because there is a lot you don't know. That applies to all areas of your life but especially to your work and career. Hints and gossip could easily mislead you.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Most of the time, you put logic before emotion but today's aspects warn you could go right the other way and act on feelings alone. Will it pay off? Maybe not, exactly, but no great harm will come of it.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
You will get conflicting information from people with different agendas today and there is no way of knowing who is telling the truth. Therefore, you must ignore everything and act only on what your inner voice tells you.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 2 04 - Nov. 22
You are reading too much into a situation that is really quite simple. Not only that, but certain individuals are trying to influence your thinking to make you feel insecure. Don't let it happen. Believe in yourself.

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
If knowledge is power then it stands to reason that the more knowledge you have about what is going on, the more power you have to influence the outcome. But don't give knowledge away or your power will fade.

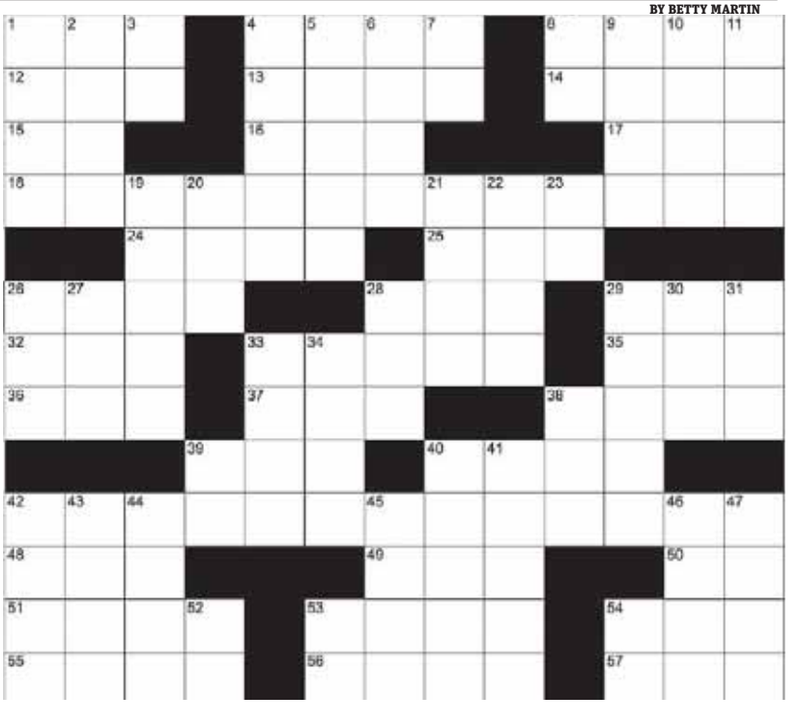
♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Someone will go out of their way to make life difficult for you today, but if you stay calm and refuse to react you will do your reputation a power of good. Always behave as if the world is watching you.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
You could easily allow yourself to believe that you can do or say anything without repercussion, which is a dangerous attitude to take. Think before you act today. It could save you a lot of trouble.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
You may think that by supporting certain causes you are doing good in the world but are you truly committed on a personal level? One cause above all oth ers is precious to you — give it your undivided attention. **SALLY BROMPTON**

Crossword

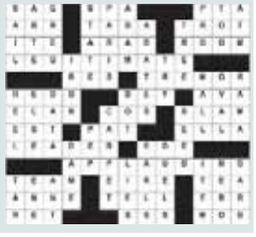
BY BETTY MARTIN



Across
1. Soft throw
4. Pull behind
8. Portico
12. French soul
13. Called up
14. TV executive Griffin
15. What Gloria called Edith
16. Invoice abbr.
17. Old model car
18. Rain or snow
24. Part of the eye
25. Tic tac toe win
26. Editing mark
28. Sanford and —
29. Coral reef
32. Summer cooler
33. Parisian school
35. Beer
36. Writing implement
37. Contented sighs
38. Elevator pioneer
39. —: Crime Scene Investigation
40. Rattle
42. Susan Lucci daytime soap (3 words)
48. Island welcome
49. Actor Wallach
50. "—the Right Thing"
51. Work on the street
53. General vicinity
54. Gun the engine
55. Olden sword
56. Workplace ogre, sometimes
57. Found on 39 across (abbr.)

Down
1. Desktop fixture
2. Actor Sharif
3. Who Wants to – a Millionaire?
4. Let the water out
5. Highway exits
6. Hostile
7. "I Will Survive" singer (init.)
8. Size before med. and lg.
9. Actress — Hatcher
10. Black and white cookie
11. Big name in cosmetics
19. Comic DeGeneres
20. So-so grade
21. Hammer or saw
22. First class (2 words)
23. "— Sir, With Love"
26. Drop bait lightly on the water
27. Dutch city
28. Distress call letters
29. Prepare food for a party
30. Living It Up! With — and Jack
31. Affirmative
33. Moderate
34. Elegant
38. This — House
39. She played Katherine Wellington on Harper's Island (init.)
40. Irritates
41. Assumed name
42. Swiss mountains
43. List
44. Inhabit
45. Medal recipient
46. Paradise
47. Star
52. Shoe width
53. Blood type
54. Host of '70s Family Feud (init.)

Yesterday's Crossword



What's online

See today's answers metronews.ca/answers.

Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

		8			2			4
9				5				
		5				8	7	
1			2	7				5
3			5		6			9
2				3	1			7
	6	7				2		
				9				8
8			1			5		

Yesterday's Sudoku

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12
Wednesday, September 2012
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- Appleby Crossing
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- 499 Hespeler Rd
- Cambridge Centre

COBOURG
- Northumberland Mall

ETOBICOKE
- Cloverdale Mall
- Sherway Gardens
- Woodbine Centre

GEORGETOWN
- 330 Guelph St

LINDSAY
- 229 Kent St
- Whitney Town Centre

MARKHAM
- 7357 Woodbine Ave
- Markville Shopping Centre
- Pacific Mall

MILTON
- 377 Main St E

MISSISSAUGA
- 980 Eglinton Ave E
- Dixie Value Mall
- Erin Mills Town Centre
- Heartland Power Centre
- Sheridan Centre
- Square One Shopping Centre
- Square One Shopping Centre – Kiosk
- Westgate SmartCentres

NEWMARKET
- Upper Canada Mall

NORTH YORK
- 1635 Lawrence Ave W
- 170 Rimrock Rd
- Bayview Village
- Centerpoint Mall
- Crossroads Plaza
- Empress Walk
- Lawrence Square
- North York Sheridan Mall
- Sheppard Centre
- Yorkgate Mall

OAKVILLE
- Hampshire Gate at Dundas
- Oakville Place

ORANGEVILLE
- 114 Broadway Ave

OSHAWA
- Five Points Mall
- Oshawa Centre

PICKERING
- Pickering Town Centre

RICHMOND HILL
- Hillcrest Mall

SCARBOROUGH
- 259 Morningside Ave
- Cedarbrae Mall – Kiosk
- Malvern Town Centre
- Parkway Mall
- Scarborough Town Centre

SUDBURY
- Brady Square
- New Sudbury Centre
- Southridge Mall

THORNHILL
- Promenade Mall

TORONTO
- 2256 Bloor St W
- 209 Danforth Ave
- 2171 Queen St E
- 2323 Yonge St
- Chinatown Centre
- College Park
- Dufferin Mall
- East York Town Centre
- Eaton Centre
- Eaton Centre II
- Eglinton Square
- Gerrard Square
- Holt Renfrew Centre
- Royal Bank Plaza
- Scotia Plaza
- Shoppers World Danforth
- Shops at Don Mills
- Yorkdale Shopping Centre – Kiosk

UXBRIDGE
- 307 Toronto St S

VAUGHAN
- Vaughan Mills

WHITBY
- Whitby Mall
- Whitby SmartCentres

WILLOWDALE
- Fairview Mall
- Fairview Mall – Kiosk

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- 4080 Highway 7

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